Moral Essays:

The Fourth Volume.

Contained in Two

TREATISES.

The First concerning the

Four Last Ends of Man.

The Second concerning the

Practice of Christian Vigilance.

Written Originally in FRENCH, *and now Translated into* ENGLISH.

LONDON,
Printed for *Samuel Manship*, at the *Ship* in *Corn-hill*, M DC XCVI.

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THE PREFACE.

WHether we desire to consider seriously upon our proper Salvation, or that we will labour to inspire this desire into those who think not thereof; it is equally necessary to know the beginning of the Way which leads thereunto; either to be able to enter into it our selves, or to shew it to others.

What is advantageous in this Enquiry, is, That those we ought to consult upon this Point are no way divided in Opinions. For Scripture declaring, That the beginning of Wisdom is the Fear of our Lord; Initium Sapientiæ timor Domini: *And the Fathers, to whom we ought to address our selves to understand the sense, have all concluded, that to return to God, it is necessary that the Mind be shaken with Motives of Fear, and that 'tis that which gives the Love of God entrance into the Soul, which is only able to operate a Solid Conversion therein.* If Man, *saith St.* Augustin, *in* Psal. 149. do not begin to serve God through fear, he shall not arrive at love, because the fear of our Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.

We must necessarily, *saith St.* Bazil, *in* Psal. 32. have recourse to Fear to introduce us to Piety, and after that Love succeeds, and gives Perfection to those who have been instructed by Fear.

It is impoſſible, *ſaith St.* Gregory *the Great, in Homil.* 4. *in Evang.* to cure the Soul of the Diſorders whereunto ſhe hath been accuſtomed, but by overwhelming her firſt by Fear.

It is very true, that the ſole Fear of Pain is not able to take away the Affection we have for Sin, becauſe it is unable of changing by it ſelf the inclination of the Heart. And thus, as St. Auſtin *ſaith, in Epiſt.* 144. In vain do we think to overcome Sin, when there is nothing but the Fear of Pain which hinders us from committing it.

Nevertheleſs Fear is always very uſeful, even then when it is not joyned to Love. For by hindring the Exterior Actions of Sin, it hinders the Habitude from being contracted, it weakens even that which may have been contracted, and prepares the way to Charity. Pellit, *ſaith St.* Auſtin, conſuetudinem malorum operum, & ſervat charitati locum. We begin, *ſaith he in another Place,* to acknowledge, that what we thought inſupportable is eaſie, we come from taſting the ſweetneſs of Piety, to be touched with the beauty of Virtue, which cauſes the Soul to paſs from the bondage of Fear to the liberty of Love.

'Tis not only to thoſe who begin to enter into the way of God, it is likewiſe for thoſe who march therein, and advance themſelves thereby, that Fear is neceſſary, becauſe it helps us to bear Temptations, it brings down Pride, and keeps the Soul in Humility. And therefore St. Auſtin *permits only thoſe in whom Charity is perfect, to paſs without Fear.* Let a Chriſtian, *ſaith he,* De Temp. Serm. 214. uphold himſelf by Fear, until it be baniſh'd by the perfection of Charity. Timeat Chriſtianus, antequam perfecta Charitas foras

foras mittat Timorem. *And the Opinion of this Father, which is the same with all the rest, is confirmed in such a manner by experience, that one may say, that what renders so many Devotions, light, inconstant, rash, presumptuous, phantastick, evaporated, is, that they are not built upon the Foundation of a wholesome Fear. Man's Mind hath such a propensity to Pride, that it ought always to have some counterpoise to humble it. It is a Vessel which must be filled with Sand to ballance it, otherwise it will overturn, and become the Shuttle-cock of all sort of Winds. And 'tis that which made St.* Bernard *say,* Happy is the Conscience in which there is continually a Combate between Fear and Love, even until what is mortal therein may be swallowed up by Death; even until that Fear which is imperfect be baniſh'd away, to give place for Joy which is perfect.

It is therefore contributing something to the profit of most Christians, to present them with some Objects capable to produce in them some Sentiments of Fear. And as there are none more proper thereunto than Death, Judgment, *and* Hell, *therefore I have chosen those, not by endeavouring to exalt and to agrandize the Idea of them, by thoughts more splendid than solid, but only by labouring to shew them more distinctly and to take away from before Mens Eyes the Vail which hinders them from seeing these Objects.*

Thus the Substance of the first Treatise of this Volume, shall be what is called, The Four last Ends of Man. *For to the end there may be none wanting, I have thought I ought to add thereunto what relates to Heaven, without missing the design I had of proposing some Objects of Fear. Heaven being not only an Ob-*

ject

ject of Deſire, but alſo of Terrour, ſeeing that there is nothing more to be feared than the being abſolutely excluded.

This Fear may be very chaſte and very pure in Perſons advanced in Vertue, who only conſider in felicity the poſſeſſion of God. It may be alſo impure and intereſſed in thoſe who ſhould conſider therein principally the exemption from miſeries in this preſent life. But although intereſſed, it does not ceaſe to have the ſame uſefulneſs as the fear of puniſhment hath; and thus 'tis good to excite it in thoſe who enter, or who walk in the way of Salvation.

I know very well there is nothing more Common, and if I may ſay ſo, more Popular than this Subject, and that there needs no more for many People to be diſcouraged at it. But I have not thought I ought to ſtop at this wicked delicateneſs, which is perchance one of the greateſt Evils of Mankind, ſeeing that it renders unprofitable to them what is moſt capable of imprinting ſomething in their Minds.

Doubtleſs it is better to repreſent to them, that theſe Objects are no commoner than others, but as they are greater, more important, and more terrible; and that they could have no worſe reaſon not to think at all, but becauſe it is evident to all the World, that there is nothing which does deſerve more that we think thereof, which is that which renders them ſo common, ſo popular.

But as impreſſions of Terrour, which ſometimes theſe Objects produce, are often unuſeful, becauſe we remain there, and that we are content to have been concerned at them by the bye, and to have formed deſigns void of converſion, which vaniſh preſently, becauſe we apply them to nothing particular; I thought the means

to

to make us reap ſome ſolid profit thereby, were to propoſe afterwards an Exerciſe of Piety, which might be on the one part the natural effect whereto the conſideration of theſe Objects ought to carry us, and which might compriſe on the other all the particular reſolutions we ought to make for the regulating of our Manners; and 'tis that which is met with, methinks, in that of Chriſtian Vigilance, *which is the Subject of the Second Treatiſe. For Jeſus Chriſt hardly concludes his Diſcourſes otherwiſe, where he repreſents to his Diſciples the terrible Idea's of Death and Judgment, than in perſwading them to be Vigilant of themſelves.* Watch, *ſaith he*, by praying always, that you may be worthy to avoid all the Evils which ſhall arrive, and to appear with confidence before the Son of Man.

Now whoſoever ſhall watch as he ought, ſhall diſcover thereby what he ought to do to accompliſh his Duty, to free himſelf from the Snares of the Devil, to prepare himſelf for Death, and Judgment, to avoid Hell, and to arrive at that happy Country which ought to be the Object of all our Deſires.

FIRST TREATISE, OF THE *Four Laſt Ends of MAN.*

BOOK I.

Of Death.

CHAP. I.

That it is ſtrange Men having Death always before their Eyes, and ſo great reaſon to think of it, do think nevertheleſs ſo little of it.

THIS not only of the Death of Martyrs that we may ſay with S. *Auguſtine*, De Civitat. Dei, l. 13. c. 4. *That by the admirable Grace of our Saviour, the Pain of Sin is become the Inſtrument of Virtue*; 'tis by the Death of all men. Death will be for them one of the moſt powerful means of their Salvation, and one of the greateſt remedies of their Evils, if they can draw the advantages which the divine mercy will procure them by this chaſtiſement which his Juſtice exerciſes over them.

Man dies not but becauſe he has ſinned, and it would ſuffice to Sin no more to think well that he muſt die. The Scripture it ſelf aſſures us of it, by diſcovering to

us thereby this ſecret of Gods bounty towards Sinners. Eccleſ. 7. 40. *Remember your End, and you will never Sin.*

In effect what is more capable to make man think of himſelf, and more proper to make him out of Love with the World, to ſuppreſs his Pride, to ſtrike him with a holy fear of Gods Judgments, than the thoughts of Death? Alſo God who ſaw how much this thought was beneficial for us, hath pleaſed that it ſhould be renewed in our minds by a number of different objects and actions, which preſenting to us continually the Idea of Death, permits us not to forget it, leſt we ſhould turn our Eyes willingly another way.

We are not only adviſed by ſo many men that we muſt die, who ever and anon part out of this World; by that of all other Animals to which we have been equalled in this point, in puniſhment for our ſins; by ſickneſſes which happen to us; by continual weakneſs of the Body which we experience continually; by infinite accidents which threaten us every moment: we are ſo likewiſe by a great part of our actions, which tending to avoid death, ought continually to place the Image thereof before our Eyes.

For what is mans life but a perpetual combat with Death? We Eat only that we may not die for hunger. We Drink that we may not die for thirſt. We Sleep that we may not die for want of it. We Labour to withſtand Death, which want might cauſe. We take reſt that we may not die with wearineſs. We are therefore at all turns grapling with Death. And being thus obliged to make continual endeavours to repulſe it, it is very ſtrange we ſhould be able to hinder our ſelves from thinking of it.

Likewiſe God will not have the impreſſion which Death makes upon the minds of men to be diminiſhed by an artifice, which they make uſe of in regard of moſt truths which incommode them; it is to palliate the Evidence and certainty thereof by affected doubts. For although there is nothing more hard to nature than the neceſſity of dying, yet is there nothing more ſure. We do

do not flatter our ſelves upon this ſcore with vain hopes. And the experience of ſo many Ages, in which we have ſeen ſo many Men yield to Death without Exception or Privilege, does form in all Men's minds ſo clear a Conviction, that even thoſe who have deſired to withdraw themſelves from the rank of Men, and make themſelves adored as Gods, have never been ſo foolish as to think they ſhould never die.

Every one therefore is perſuaded he ſhall die. We receive from all parts continual Allarms thereof. And moreover Chriſtian Religion teacheth us that this ſo unavoidable Death ought to place us for ever in a ſtate of Happineſs, or Miſery; and that theſe two Eternities which are ſo different, the one ſo deſirable, and the other ſo frightful, depend on the diſpoſition of the Heart wherein that laſt moment ſhall find us: That it will give it ſelf at that inſtant an irrevocable Decree which will decide our Lot for ever, and what renders this Decree favourable, or contrary, is the uſe we make of our Life here, which is only given us to prepare our ſelves for it.

Who would not imagin but that Men who make a profeſſion of believing theſe Truths, ſhould be employed continually about theſe frightful Objects? And indeed 'tis this which God pretends in placing them ſo frequently before our Eyes. 'Tis what Reaſon dictates to us, and what it makes us do in ſome occaſions of much leſs Importance.

We need not advertiſe Criminals, ſhut up in Priſon, in expectation of Judgment, where their Honour, their Goods, and their Lives are at ſtake to think of the danger they are in, of the means to avoid it, of the ways to make their Judges favourable to them; their State and Condition puts them in mind thereof, and their Thoughts incline them naturally thereunto, without any need of uſing endeavours to apply themſelves to it. But how much more would they buſie themſelves about it, if they thought they could advance their Affairs by thinking on it, and that there were no better means to gain their Judges favour, and to render

their Cauſe good, than by having the day of their Tryal always in their minds?

This is the Image of Man's Condition, but not of his Conduct. He is a Priſoner, like theſe Criminals we ſpeak of; for the whole World is Man's general Priſon, and we go not out of it but by Puniſhment, Death being one to which all Men are condemn'd by God's Juſtice. No Man dies properly of that which Men call *a Natural Death.* Every Death is the Execution of a Decree of God, who condemns us to it. Some are condemn'd to die by the Sword, others by Fire, ſome by Shipwrack, ſome by Poyſon, ſome by the Plague, and Fevers, and by other Diſeaſes; and the Death of theſe laſt, although accompanied with Circumſtances leſs frightful to the Senſes, is often more hard and troubleſome than the others.

We are in expectation not only of the Execution of the Decree of Death, which is already given againſt us; but of another much more terrible, which is not yet pronounced, and which ſhould make us Happy or Miſerable for all Eternity.

We know that it might help us much to have the Mind fill'd with theſe Thoughts, and to repreſent to our ſelves often this laſt Moment which will finiſh our Lives and begin our Eternity. All that environs us puts us in mind thereof. And nevertheleſs the truth is, That there are very few who think of it, and a great many fewer that think ſeriouſly of it. Moſt Men on the contrary place all their Care and Study to baniſh all theſe Objects out of their Thoughts; to ſee Death the leaſt they can, to drive away all that repreſents it lively, and they proſper ſo well therein, that they all come almoſt to Death without ever having Thought or Dreamt of it.

This blindneſs which Men procure themſelves, is doubtleſs one of their greateſt Misfortunes; and the Devil hath no greater means to deſtroy them than to nouriſh them therein, and conduct them thus brutiſhly to Death without reflecting or foreſeeing. 'Tis this ought to incline thoſe whoſe Eyes God opens ſometimes

times to ſee the Miſery and Danger of this State, to do all poſſibly they can to diſſipate thoſe Clouds which hide theſe Objects from us, of which it is ſo neceſſary for us to think; and without doubt one of the beſt means to ſucceed therein, is to obſerve well the Wiles which are uſed, either to baniſh abſolutely out of the mind the remembrance of Death, or to think thereof only in ſo weak a manner, that it may not be able to make any impreſſion upon the Heart, nor hinder any ways the courſe of its Paſſions.

CHAP. II.

Of the Artifice Men make uſe of to weaken the Idea of Death; which is to look upon their Lives as long and certain.

THere are hardly any People who can hearken without trouble to the Commandment, which the Prophet *Iſaiah* made in behalf of God to King *Ezechias*, (*Iſa.* 38. 1.) to put his Affairs in order, and to prepare himſelf for Death; *Diſpone domui tuæ.* The Image of Death, when both near and certain, does make the moſt firm and undaunted to quake: And when any one is told that he hath but very little, or no time to live, he is much more troubled to moderate the Fear he apprehends thereof, than to incline him to think of it.

Every one is moved in theſe occaſions, and preſſed not only to order the Affairs of his Houſe, but alſo thoſe of his Conſcience. The moſt wicked and impious are troubled thereat, and not daring to die as they have lived, they find more ſafety in making the beſt uſe they can of the Actions of Religion they have neglected in their life-time.

'Tis not then through a conſtancy of the Soul, that Men are ſo little concerned, during their Health, at the fear of Death; 'tis not becauſe they can undergo

the ſight of it without Scar, nor that they can hinder themſelves from thinking of it when it preſents it ſelf to them with all it hath that's terrible; 'tis becauſe they repreſent it not to themſelves in their Lives, but by ſo dim and ſo confus'd an Idea, that it is not poſſible to move or ſtir them.

To weaken and obſcure thus the Idea of Death, they make uſe of divers Inventions, which it is neceſſary ſhould be diſcovered. One of the principal ones is, That imagining their Lives very long, they look upon Death, which ought to terminate it, ſo far off, that it diminiſheth infinietly the Impreſſion that it might make upon their Minds.

For how terrible ſoever an Object may be, we are generally little touched at it when we think it far off; becauſe the Mind applying it ſelf to this long Interval, which is between us and it, perceives much more the Good of being freed from this Evil during all that time, than the Evil it has reaſon to apprehend after the expiration of it. We imagine moreover, in regard of theſe Evils at ſo far a diſtance from us, that there will be time enough to think thereof when they ſhall be nearer us; but yet we can only enjoy the reſt which time permits; and what we do in reſpect of Death, is properly there. No Man would die not having conſidered very well of it; but we imagin we ſhall think thereof one Day or other, and that we ſhall have time to do it; and upon this falſe aſſurance we take all our Lives the boldneſs not to think of it at all.

The Devil ſpeaks not now to us, as he did to our Forefathers, *You ſhall not die*; this would be too groſs a Temptation, and no body would be deceived by it: But he tells them, You ſhall not die preſently, you have yet a great while to live; and by this means he deceives almoſt all the World, becauſe he finds in Men's Hearts an Inclination to be flattered by theſe vain Hopes, through a deſire they have to enjoy, more quietly, ſome ſenſible things which they have a mind unto.

This

This Illuſion includes two. The one, That we conceive the ſpace we promiſe our ſelves to live, like ſomething a long time off. The other, That we aſſure our ſelves, without reaſon, that this ſpace will not be ſhortned by any of thoſe ſo many accidents which threaten Men's Lives, and which make the greateſt part of them to die much ſooner than they thought of. So to diſſipate it, we need only conſider whether we have reaſon to look upon our Lives, as either long or certain. And it is a very hard matter to examine theſe two Points truly, without being aſtoniſh'd at Men's blindneſs.

CHAP. III.

Of the ſhortneſs of Life, and the Idea we ought to have of it.

IT is not meant here to convince men of the ſhortneſs of their Lives: They cannot oftentimes withſtand the evidence which perſuades them to it; and they complain ſometimes of it, when they find it too ſhort to execute their Deſigns, or that it does not permit them to enjoy as long as they would the objects of their Paſſions.

It is intended to perſuade them that this Life is ſhort, in relation to the end for which it is given us, which is to prepare us for Death and Eternity; that in what Age ſoever we be touched with this Thought, it is never too ſoon to apply our ſelves thereunto, although we ſhould do nothing elſe all the remainder of our Lives; that we ought to make haſte to do it; and that it is a folly to put off this Thought to another time: And as the Devil, to diſſuade us from it, flatters us commonly with the Idea of a long Life, ſo we muſt endeavour to correct this Idea, and to ſee fully what right we have to promiſe it to our ſelves.

It would ſuffice for that to tell men, that labouring to enter into a ſtate of Eternity, no Time that is given us to prepare our ſelves for it ought to ſeem long and tedious. There is no time finite which hath proportion with Eternity, which is endleſs. A Month, a Day, an Hour, a Minute, have ſome proportion with thouſands of Years; becauſe theſe thouſands of Years comprehend only a certain number of Months, Days, Hours, and Minutes: But thouſands of Years have not any at all with Eternity, becauſe what Multiplication ſoever can be made, they will never make up the Meaſure.

Although God ſhould have obliged us to conſider many millions of Years upon Death, and to accompany this Conſideration with all imaginable Auſterities, and with a general renouncing of all human Satisfactions, it would be yet much leſs than to oblige ſome People, who ought to enter upon ſome conſiderable Charge, to think thereof, and to prepare themſelves but for one Hour.

There is but one Eternal Preparation which can have any relation to Eternal Happineſs; and God would be in the right to require it, according to St. *Auſtin*, in *Pſal.* 36. if he would act towards us with an exact Juſtice. Whether it be that we conſider the Goods God has prepared in Heaven for his Elect, or we conſider the Evils wherewith he will puniſh the Wicked, and which he deſires we may avoid, by the uſe we ſhall make of Life; all Time is ſhort to deſerve the one, and to warrant us of the other.

But if we muſt needs prepare our ſelves Eternally to obtain the Riches of Heaven, ſays this holy Doctor, (*Ibid.*) When will the time of enjoying it come? It is therefore neceſſary that this Preparation be limited to a certain time, to the end that this time being paſt, we may obtain that Happineſs which ſhall never end. But although limited it may be long, and God might have obliged us to long Labours and Miſeries, to deſerve to be eternally Happy: Although thoſe Labours and Miſeries ſhould be for a thouſand Years, put them in the Scale

Scale with Eternity, and you ſhall ſee they will be nothing compared with it. Nevertheleſs it is very requiſite that this Preparation which God requires from us, be not ſo long. It is not ſtretched forth to each of thoſe who begin to conſider it, but to what of their Life remains. Now what is man's Life? I do not ſpeak of thoſe whoſe Age or bad Health puts them every moment in mind of approaching Death: I ſpeak of thoſe who are in good Health, and to whom Age permits them to promiſe themſelves in their Life-time all that men can reaſonably expect: And by how many think you ought that to be eſteemed?

Thoſe who make Treatiſes, whoſe Gain or Loſs depends on the length of man's Life, build them upon this Rule, confirmed by Experience, That 'tis more rare that any man, whatſoever he be, conſidered in any part of his Life, do live twenty Years beyond the Age he is of, than that he ſhould die before that term: That is, Take a certain number of men, of what Age you will, there will be more of thoſe dead twenty Years after than there will be living. So that each of theſe men would do prudently to renounce the hopes of a longer Life, provided they ſhould be aſſured to live twenty Years.

But as theſe Agreements are not in our Power, each man ought rather to be perſuaded, that he ſhall not be in this World at the end of twenty Years from the time he counts from, than that he ſhall. And 'tis from thence that one ought to judge whether there is reaſon to believe that the Life of man is long, and whether there is not juſt grounds to prepare for Death.

For is it poſſible that men can believe that 'tis too much to prepare themſelves twenty Years for Eternity, and that they can imagine this ſpace of time as too long for that Work? How many ſeveral Employments are there in the World, which require as long Preparations? Is there any one who would refuſe to lead a laborious and troubleſome Life twenty Years, that he might become a Prince? And the World, Is it not full of People who live a long time in a very toilſome manner for very

ſmall

ſmall Recompences? Will there be nothing then but Heaven for which we ſhall find every thing unſufferable?

If men will know what twenty Years Hardſhip is, let them reflect upon thoſe they have already paſſed, and conſider with what ſwiftneſs they are fled away. It is hardly a day (ſaid St. *Auguſtine*, in *Pſal.* 31.) ſince *Adam* was chaſed from the terreſtrial Paradiſe; many Ages are paſt ſince that time, it is true; But what are become of them? If you had lived ſince *Adam*'s Baniſhment until this time, you would think your Life had been but ſhort: Therefore what is twenty Years in our Eyes? I know very well, that we look upon thoſe which are to come otherwiſe than thoſe which are paſt; but 'tis a deceit of our Imagination, they will paſs away with the ſame ſwiftneſs: The Torrent of the World hurries them away, and in a trice we ſhall be amazed to find our ſelves come to the end. *Greg. Nazianz. Or.* 17.

The Goſpel, to explicate to us this brevity, repreſents to us the whole courſe of Ages under the Figure of one Day, and reckons the time of the Law of Grace, but as the Evening and one Hour of the Day, *Noviſſima hora.* What part then took up twenty Years in this Evening, and in this laſt Hour?

He who is but twenty Years diſtant from Death, is very near; and in ſtead of concluding that 'tis not yet time to think of Death, he ought to conclude, That 'tis time not to think now of the World, and that what time he hath to live, is not worth the Pains. For what is it to be twenty Years, more or leſs, a little richer, or poorer; a little more at eaſe, or incommoded; a little higher, or lower; ſeeing that this time being ended, we ought to enter into a ſtate of Eternity, where all theſe Differences will be deſtroyed, and where God will make other Differences amongſt Men, which will be Eternal? Behold what deſerves thinking of! I do not ſay twenty Years, but twenty millions of Years, becauſe by thinking thereof we may be much more able to contribute to aſſure and augment our Happineſs;

Happineſs; and by deferring to think of it, at leaſt, we put our ſelves in danger of being eternally Miſerable, and we ſhall certainly be leſs Happy.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Uncertainty of Life.

GOD hath not only commanded, that the time he gives men to prepare themſelves for Death be ſhort, but alſo that it be uncertain; and that Death being able to ſurpriſe them at every moment, they had always reaſon to fear it. His deſign thereby hath been to render it always preſent to us, and to ſtir us up by this means to a continual Vigilance. 'Tis he himſelf who hath been willing to advertiſe us of it, by telling us in the Goſpel, *Watch, becauſe you know neither the day nor the hour*; *Vigilate, quia neſcitis diem neque horam.*

The Fathers, by following this Light, have drawn the ſame conſequence of the incertitude of this Life: Seeing that Life is uncertain, ſay they, we muſt not put off being converted; becauſe God, who promiſed Pardon to thoſe who returned ſincerely to him, does not promiſe it the next day to any one.

'Tis *God's great mercy*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, (in Pſal. 34. item *in* Pſal. 101. 144.) *that in advertiſing us to live well, he hath hidden the day of our death from us, that we may promiſe our ſelves nothing for the time to come. For fear*, ſays he, in another place, (in Joan. tr. 33.) *that men through deſpair ſhould precipitate themſelves yet into more diſorder, he has promis'd them the Port of Pennance: And for fear that the hope of Pardon ſhould be an occaſion of their living evilly, he has made the day of their death uncertain.*

But Men enchanted with the love of Worldly things find means to ſhift off this Counſel of Gods mercy to them. As they fear oftentimes, when there's no reaſon to fear, they imagin and conceive aſſurances, when there is no cauſe to be aſſured. What Examples ſoever they learn every day from People who have been ſurpriſed by Death,

Death, either they will not make Reflection that as much may happen to them, or they ſuppoſe without ground, that they ſhall not be of the number of thoſe miſerable Creatures; and thus forming to themſelves a cloud which hinders them from ſeeing the danger which threatens them at every turn, they continue to follow their paſſions, without being the leaſt amuſed at the fear of Death.

But they contemn thoſe dangers by not ſeeing them, and on the contrary by acting in ſuch ſort as not to ſee them; to deliver themſelves from this illuſion, they need only to open their eyes, and conſider ſeriouſly that life is as uncertain for us as for others.

There needs no proof to be convinced of this, a few Reflections concerning theſe things will ſuffice. There is nothing more common than Death; nor nothing ſo rare as not to be ſurpriſed by it. Many are overwhelmed at once by ſuddain deaths, others fall into ſickneſſes which preſently take away their reaſon, though they do not take away their lives ſo ſoon, and do the ſame effect as ſudden Deaths in what relates to the hindring them from preparing themſelves for Death. Greg. mor. l. 25. c. 2. *Subitum eſt homini quod ante cogitare non potuit.*

But without any conſideration of theſe accidents which are more rare, it may in one ſenſe be ſaid, that almoſt all Deaths are ſudden and unprovided, becauſe there are few that we have had time to foreſee beforehand.

The State of Health, and that of Sickneſs which brings Death is generally followed immediately, and is not ſeparated by any ſenſible interval: So that the ſame day ſometimes we are well and mortally ſick in appearrance.

We ordinarily foreſee the Fall of Buildings, becauſe we ſee almoſt all parts of it; and there are certain Signs to be aſſured of it, when we doubt. But Mans body is an Edifice which we cannot viſit; 'tis a Machine whoſe Springs are hidden, and which may be all ready to break and to fall to ruin, without any ones being aware thereof. Such an one thinks he is far from death,

who carries it in his Boſom; and ſuch an one is really far from it at this moment, who ſhall be ſtruck with it the next.

The Machine of the Body is compoſed of ſo many little parts, of ſo many Veſſels and Springs, that almoſt any thing will diſorder it, and hinder its Motions; and thoſe who know the Structure of it the moſt exactly, are ſo far from being ſurpriz'd that men die ſo ſoon and ſo frequently, that they are aſtoniſh'd that they can laſt for any time.

Let us joyn to the Conſideration of the weakneſs of our Bodies, and this great number of Accidents and Sickneſſes to which they are ſubject, the Conſideration of God's Providence, which diſpoſes Soveraignly of our Lives and Deaths, and whoſe Decrees are to us unknown; we ſhall ſee more clearly how many Deluſions there are to aſſure our ſelves of the length of this Life, and to put off thinking of Death to another time than that which God hath given us at preſent. For they are not properly Sickneſſes which bring Death with them; 'tis the Decree of God's Will: We are dead before him from the very moment we were born, becauſe he created us at a certain Inſtant, to make us die exactly at another.

All men, as we have ſaid already, are condemn'd to Death by the Juſtice of God, and their Deaths are aſſigned to certain hours and moments. This Ordinance is executed every day upon a very great number of Perſons up and down in the World. Who can then be aſſured of any day which ſhall not be his laſt? We perceive not, ſaid one, any Signs or any Preſages of Death. It is very true: But amongſt thoſe who ought to die that ſame day, there are always many who are appointed to die without theſe Preſages and Signs. And thus the confidence we may have not to be of that Number, is raſh and groundleſs.

That which is ſtrange, is, that we only flatter our ſelves in this ſort when we are buſied in ſettling the Affairs of our Salvation: For when we are employed in Humane Affairs, we ſcarce want the remembrance of the

the incertainty of this Life; and we are so much the more mindful thereof, as the Interests are greater. We resolve for example, to hazard some small thing upon another Mans Life; but we are very careful in doing it when it concerns some great and considerable Sum: We will then have Security, because we know not, says one, what may happen. We prevent in these Contracts the Inconveniences that may arise from Mens Deaths, by a thousand Clauses and Precautions. In fine, we suffer oftentimes certain Losses, for not hazarding great Sums upon other Mens Lives, or our own: So much we are perswaded that there is nothing more uncertain than Life, nor nothing more frequent than to be surprized at Death. Nevertheless, by an incomprehensible subversion of the Mind, when it concerns Eternity, we stifle all fears, we are at quiet, we never dream of the uncertainty of this Life, and we live as if it were exposed to no Accidents, and that we were fully assured that it must continue all the time we have promised to our selves.

It is impossible we should not condemn the indiscretion of this Conduct: But we must not stop there: Reason ought to correct the false Ideas wherewith our Imaginations are stuffed. And to hinder our selves from beholding Death at this deceitful distance, which robs it of what it hath that's most terrible; or with this false assurance of not being surprized by it, upon which we rest satisfied; it ought to make us acknowledge, on the contrary, that it is indeed very near us; that it importunes and besieges us on all parts; that we have occasion to fear every moment and in every place to hear this frightful voice Ecchoing in our Ears: We must die, we must appear before God, and receive our sentence for all Eternity, there is no more delay. And from thence it is easie to conclude, that we cannot make too much haste to think seriously on it: That we have no time to lose, and that our trouble ought to be, that we have not always been mindful of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

How dangerous it is to put off thinking of Death till our laſt Sickneſs.

I Pretend not to ſpeak here of ſome Regular perſons, who, having their imaginations too quick, are ſtruck too much with the thoughts of Death: For we allow that theſe perſons do well to bear with their weakneſs, and to nourish their piety by other objects.

I ſpeak of thoſe to whom theſe thoughts may be uſeful, and who nevertheleſs avoid them. And as their being ſo remote from thence, may yet proceed from divers cauſes, we ought to judge thereof differently.

For there are ſome, in whom this remoteneſs is an effect of a ſimple and meer Negligence, and a natural ſhunning ſome melancholy Objects, and who yet lead a life exempt from crimes, practiſing many good works, and deſiring ſincerely to be with God.

There are ſome in whom it ſprings from an ill govern'd ſpirituallity, who love only what comforts or raiſes the mind, avoiding all that humbles it.

Likewiſe I will not deny, that there are Souls who have no need at all of theſe thoughts, and which God draws to him by other ways.

But theſe three diſpoſitions, joyned together, are not ſo ordinary as that which hinders the thinking of Death, becauſe this Idea troubles the pleaſures, and incommodes the paſſions. Moſt People omit thinking of Death as they omit to be Converted, and they put off the one and the other until their laſt ſickneſs, becauſe they can do it no longer.

In vain endeavour we to repreſent to them the brevity and the uncertainty of mans life. For ſudden Deaths, which take away abſolutely the means of thinking of it, are not ſo frequent as thoſe which allow ſome time to prepare for it; the love they have for worldly things, being always more ſtrong than the fear of an Accident, which they look upon as ſeldom happning, does never

never permit them to think of death, until ſome violent Sickneſs take away the means of deferring it any longer. 'Tis not that all that is diſtinct in their minds; for they love to conceive theſe kind of things but confuſedly: But it is eaſie to ſee that 'tis in effect what hapned therein, and what cauſed the ground of their repoſe.

As this ſtate and condition is very common, it is good to examine it particularly, and to endeavour to give it the juſt horrour which is due to it; and 'tis what theſe following Conſiderations may make appear.

Firſt, It is evident, that this Diſpoſition includes a reſolution of hazarding Damnation, if we happen to be ſurprized by an unprovided Death, being we take no precaution againſt Death which overwhelms all at once. And this reſolution is ſo fooliſh in it ſelf, that men never commit the like in reſpect of Worldly things. For example, have we ſeen a Prince ſo fooliſh to play his Kingdom againſt a Straw, to put Life and Honour in danger that he may gain a falſe Diamond? Nevertheleſs theſe are follies infinitely leſs than that of expoſing our ſelves to the hazard of being loſt for ever, and becoming everlaſtingly miſerable, for any temporal thing whatſoever. 'Tis this nevertheleſs that all thoſe do, who expect to think of them when they ſhall be dangerouſly ſick.

'Tis not only a Folly, 'tis a very Criminal one, which angers God by the Diſdain which it offers; which violates the Command he gives us of being converted: which abuſes his Patience and Mercy, which deſerves that he refuſe at our Deaths the favours we have neglected in our life time.

Moreover this Folly is grounded upon divers Errors, which every one may eaſily diſcover if they will. It is true, that ſudden Deaths are more rare than others. But how many are thoſe, which Men call not ſudden, to which they cannot prepare themſelves by the Sacraments? How many which do ſo overwhelm the mind by the violence of ſickneſs, that it is impoſſible to think ſeriouſly of any thing, or to practiſe actions of Religion but after a brutiſh manner?

Do

Do men think that it is very eaſie for a Soul, whoſe whole attention is buſied about the Sentiment of her corporal evils, to conſider of objects whereunto ſhe is abſolutely a Stranger, to recollect with bitterneſs her whole life, to acknowledge and condemn all her former faults? On the contrary, is it not clear, both by Experience and Reaſon, that almoſt all men are never leſs able to think of Death, than when they are neareſt it; and that moſt of their exterior actions of Piety in this Condition, may be indeed, in good Men, marks of the diſpoſition wherein Sickneſs found them, but in others nothing but the effects of Cuſtom, which all thoſe who make profeſſion of any Religion, whatever it be, have, to die with the Ceremonies of their Religion; and even oftentimes of the weakneſs which renders the Diſeaſed incapable of reſiſting thoſe who brought them thither?

But although we had in this condition all the liberty of mind that we could deſire or wiſh for, can we imagin we ought to have any great confidence in theſe teſtimonies of Converſion, which go but juſt before Death? That is not the Judgment the Church has always given thereof: She, on the contrary, has always been doubtful of them, and has endeavoured to perſwade her Children not to confide in them: She has ſent thoſe to do Penance ſhe had reconciled in this condition, as if they had not received Abſolution, eſteeming almoſt as nothing all they have done during their being ſick. Divers Reaſons may be brought; but I ſhall content my ſelf with alledging one, which we have already made uſe of in another Treatiſe.

'Tis, That in the common way Mans heart does not change at once the Object and the End: We may well change in a moment our outward Actions; but Love, which enjoys the principal place in the Heart, ſcarcely changes in a moment; it is requiſite that it be weakned by little and little, and that there be another to take its place by degrees. 'Tis thus that Humane Paſſions are changed; and God, who will that the Operations of his Grace be not ſenſibly diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe of Nature, obſerves ordinarily the ſame method: He be-

gins to ſhake the Heart by Fear, before he touch it with his Love; and oftentimes he touch's it a long time by ſome Principles of Love, before he become Maſter of it by an over-ruling Love, which turns the Heart towards him as towards its laſt End, and which delivers it from the bondage of the Love of Creatures. Thus as the Converſion of dying Sinners cannot paſs by theſe degrees, it muſt needs be miraculous to be true. The Church deſpairs not of this Miracle; and 'tis for this reaſon that ſhe grants the Sacrament to dying Perſons: but ſhe fears very much that the Sentiments which appear in Sinners who are in this condition, are only ſmall beginnings of Fear, or of the Love of God, which are not ſufficient for a true Converſion. 'Tis this which obliges Sinners not only to labour, but alſo to labour ſeriouſly for their Salvation, that their Love may have time to encreaſe, and to arrive at a ſtate wherein we may ſay they are truly Converted.

Father *Jurſeus*, of the Society of *Jeſus*, in his Book *of the Knowledge of the Love of Jeſus Chriſt*, (*lib.* 2. *ſect.* 19.) does alledge another Reaſon againſt thoſe who defer their Converſion until Death, which is worthy to be related here; and it is in theſe Terms. *My ſecond Reaſon is, That thou oughteſt not to put off thy Repentance, becauſe thou knoweſt that to do it, whenſoever thou doſt attempt it, thou muſt neceſſarily have* an Efficacious Grace. *And who has told thee that God will give it thee then? Haſt thou aſſurance from him that it ſhall not be wanting? Expect alſo, that delaying to quit thy ſin, and this ſin ſticking to thee by its proper weight, and ſwaying thee by a certain* Moral Neceſſity *to commit others, and ſo heaping ſins upon ſins, and crimes upon crimes, thou makeſt that God will be leſs diſpoſed to give thee this Grace, and, as S.* Paul *ſays,* Secundum duritiam tuam & cor impœnitens theſaurizas tibi iram in die iræ; *Thou obligeſt him conformly by the hardneſs and the obſtinacy of thy heart, to refuſe it thee at the day that thou ſhalt preciſely have need of it for thy Salvation.*

Alſo God hath been ſo far from promiſing Sinners to give them at their death theſe ſort of Graces, how neceſſary ſoever they may be to them for their Converſion, that

that he hath promiſed, on the contrary, in ſome manner, not to give them to them; ſeeing he declares in the Book of *Proverbs*, that he will laugh at theſe ſinners at the time of their death, *Prov.* 1. 26. *Ego quoque in interitu veſtro ridebo*; that he will laugh at them, *& ſubſannabo*, and that he will not hear them when they call on him; *Tunc invocabunt me, & non exaudiam*; which denotes at the ſame time, both that theſe inveterated ſinners do not forbear to practiſe outward Actions of Religion, and that they do not obtain God's Mercy by theſe Actions.

Finally, This Liberty of Mind which ſome have in their laſt Sickneſs, and which thoſe we ſpeak of look upon as an aſſured Means to their Salvation, is ſo far from being an help to repair all the paſt diſorders of this Life, that it gives leave often to the greateſt Temptation which is able to attack Men in this ſtate, which is that of an exceſs of Terror, which caſts the Soul into aſtoniſhment and deſpair; and there are none who are more expoſed to it, than thoſe who have never deſired to think of death whilſt they were in health.

'Tis a ſtrange thing but to ſee our ſelves environed with deadly Griefs, to open at once our eyes and behold theſe terrible Objects, on which we have never dar'd to look, and to find nothing but Crimes in our Conſciences. Thoſe who have employed themſelves moſt with the thoughts of death, do grant that there is an infinite difference betwixt ſeeing at a diſtance, and ſeeing near at hand.

The ſtouteſt do give back when they are in this condition: What then muſt be the Convulſions of a miſerable Soul, which, being voluntarily blind her whole life, thinking only on what might divert her, comes on a ſudden to diſcover Death, Devils, Judgment, and Hell?

Thus there are nothing but bottomleſs Pits and Precipices on all ſides, for thoſe who defer thinking of Death until they are ſo near it: All things are equally dangerous to them, ſtupidity and liberty

of Mind, forgetfulneſs and the remembrance of Death.

We are then ſo far from being able to look upon this Condition as favourable to recover the Grace we have loſt, that on the contrary, it is viſible it puts us in great danger of loſing it. We ought to be ſo far from diſpenſing with our ſelves from being prepared for Death during our Health, by putting it off until we be forced to it by Sickneſs; that we ought on the contrary, to think continually thereof whilſt we are in health, that we may not be obliged to think of it being ſick.

And laſtly, We muſt be ſo far from expecting to repair by thoſe Actions of Piety which we may do in this extremity, the Diſorders in which we have paſſed this Life, that we muſt endeavour on the contrary, to obtain from God by long exerciſes of Piety, the Grace not to faint or loſe courage in theſe laſt Tentations, but to practiſe with Piety theſe laſt Actions of Religion.

CHAP. VI.

That the Thought of Death is not only helpful to free us from Sin, but alſo a puiſſant Remedy to preſerve us from falling into it. That 'tis good to repreſent to our ſelves the ſtate of dying Men.

THE laſt inconvenience which happens to thoſe who being unwilling yet to forſake Sin, baniſh out of their Minds all Thoughts of Death, and leave them to their laſt Sickneſs, is common with thoſe who flye theſe Thoughts through a wicked Delicateneſs, or a falſe Spirituality, which gives them a taſte only for the Objects which comfort and puff them up. 'Tis for want of thinking upon Death, that they are deprived of one of the greateſt Succours, and one of the moſt efficacious Means that God hath given us, to free us from the Love of periſhable Things, to make us eſteem thoſe which are Eternal, to judge well of the World

World and all that is therein, to moderate our Paſſions, and laſtly to flye Sin.

'Tis true, This may be ſaid of all Objects of Fear which Religion propoſes unto us, which are all needful to uphold the Soul againſt Temptation. But it is certain, that amongſt theſe Objects, that of Death has a particular force to pacifie the Paſſions, by an impreſſion of Terrour: For it does not only comprehend the Ideas of God's Judgement, and of Hell; that is, of what is moſt terrible; but it paints it likewiſe in the imagination, by more lively and more ſenſible Images than thoſe other Objects, becauſe it enters there by our Senſes; and being often ſpectators of Men's Death, we are alſo oftentimes Witneſſes of the ſtate dying Men are found in.

Now as thoſe who have made human Laws, having been willing to diſſwade Men from Crimes by the fear of Puniſhments, have had a care that they ſhould be accompanied with certain diſmal and tragical Pomps, the ſight of which might cauſe Terrour in the Spectators: God who had likewiſe a deſign that Death, to which all Men are Condemned, ſhould ſerve to keep them in their Duties, hath been pleaſed that the ſight thereof ſhould be frightful; thereby to make them enter into themſelves again, and conſider what they are. Thus as it is neceſſary for this reaſon to aſſiſt at mens Death, ſo is it alſo to repreſent it to themſelves, and to ſtrike their imagination by Circumſtances which accompany it.

There are divers ſorts. But we will ſpeak only of thoſe which happen in Mens Deaths which are called happy, to the end nothing may be ſaid which is not ſeen in all Deaths. Methinks there is not any more to be deſired than that where we ſee Men die in their Beds, in the midſt of their Children, and Kinsfolks, and Friends. Nevertheleſs there would be many things in this Spectacle which might be capable to frighten us, if we did not ſee it daily by an unfortunate Addreſs in others, without dreaming that we our ſelves muſt ſuddenly paſs through the ſame ſtate.

It is more dreadful than we imagin to ſee them ſtretched forth upon a Bed, a Croſs in the hand, expecting the ſtroke of Death, and the execution of the ſentence given againſt all Men; to ſee that not only thoſe who environ us, but all Creatures together are unable to help us; to feel Death which ſeizes upon us by little and little, trying to overwhelm us, and laſtly, to ſee our ſelves periſh and be annhilated in reſpect of this World.

It is good to conſider, that we all ſee our ſelves before we die in the loweſt rank of Men, that is to ſay, in a ſtate the moſt vile that can be amongſt Men. There is for example, not any King whatſoever at the point of Death who would not wiſh to be the meaneſt of his Subjects. And there is not ſo miſerable a Slave who would change his fortune for that of a Kings, if he had but a Quarter of an Hour to live: He is then in effect in this extream lowneſs; He is already deprived of all his Human felicity, and has already experienced this Death, before that of the Body.

Thus all the Grandeurs and all the Pleaſures have for limit, even from this life, the loweſt degree of meanneſs and miſery. That is the end which attends the moſt eminent, life of this World. A dying Prince may ſay, that from that moment which begun his life even to Eternity, there is no more Human greatneſs nor pleaſure for him. He does not only ſee them no more for the time to come, but he ſees them not likewiſe in that which is paſt. Theſe objects as to him change their nature, and appear to him only as vain phantoms which vaniſh away; and if he have ſome ſenſe of Religion, it is rather a weight which overthrows him with the fears of the reckoning he is going to make to God.

All men then are reduced before they die to the laſt degree of poverty, that is, to be deprived of all good, and all human pleaſure, and to ſee themſelves in an entire lack of power of ever injoying them; which does not happen in ſome extremity of miſery whereto Man may be reduced, not being as yet ready to die.

Theſe

These are only the outward marks of Death; and I have no design thereby, but to terrifie the senses by the image of the outward part of this state; but the inward is much more frightful and terrible. Which is what we shall endeavour to unfold, to the end that the Idea of Death may have more force to stop our passions.

CHAP. VII.

The first manner of considering Death, which is to look upon it as the destruction of the World for every dying Person. The terrible effects of this destruction upon the Soul.

BEsides the cunning which Men have, never to consider Death but as at a great distance, or not to look upon it but in others, troubling themselves the least they can about dying Mens condition, they have yet another which reaches very far; which is, they imagin to themselves so gross and so confused an Idea thereof, that it hides all that is terrible from them.

For they scarcely conceive this state, but as a want of knowledge, and a separation from the commerce of this life; so that when they say a Man is Dead, they mean only we see him no more, and that he has no concern as to the affairs of this World. In a word, they ground the Idea of Death, only upon what we cease to do in dying, and not upon what they begin to do and perceive at the hour of Death. Nevertheless this Idea is not far from representing to us what is most terrible in Death.

It is very true, that Death is a deprivation of life and human Actions, but 'tis a privation which is perceived, and which produces very strange effects in the Soul.

To comprehend these effects, we must consider, that whilst the Soul is united to the body, her attention is divided by several sorts of sentiments, knowledges and passions, she perceives the objects which act upon the

body, according to the divers ways of acting, and these different ways of perceiving them are called sentiments or actions of the senses. Upon this she forms the Ideas of all things. She is likened thereto by her passions, and she is always busied about many of these objects.

She is not only busied, but she builds and relies upon them, when she is not absolutely addicted to God. For being not made to be able to uphold her self, she must necessarily seek some means to do it out of her self; she is born to know and love, and she does not find enough in her self whereby to satisfie these inclinations, she must therefore fill with something else the Vacuity she perceives in her self.

Some of these objects make very agreeable impressions upon her Sense; others content her Curiosity and Vanity; others comfort her, perswading her against those which are troublesome; others nourish her hopes; others hearten her against her fears. The Soul then is inclin'd towards all these objects, She relies thereon: She is bound to them so, that she cannot free her self from them without grief and trouble.

Oftentimes she is not aware of these Inclinations, but begins to feel them by little and little, when she comes to be separated from what she loves; because she being deprived thereof makes her sensible in proportion as her Inclination is; according to this Maxim of Saint *Austin*, We lose not without grief any thing, except we enjoy it without passion; *Hoc sine amore aderat, quod sine dolore discedit.*

There are very few who have not a great quantity of these Inclinations: And although they are not well known but by the actual separation from the Objects, we may be able to conceive something of them by separating them by thought, and by imagining that we are deprived of them by some accident.

If we thought, for example, not to put our trust in the Objects of Sight, and that they contributed nothing to the tranquility of the Soul; let us imagin what state we shall be, if through blindness we were deprived of it, and we shall see, that we were effectually fixed to it,

it, ſeeing that we look upon this ſtate as one of the greateſt evils which can befall us.

The ſole Sight of Men does comfort us, becauſe we always ſee in them a certain ground of compaſſion capable of giving us ſome aſſiſtance in our neceſſities, which at leaſt nouriſheth our hopes. Now hopes cauſe a kind of joy, according to the Apoſtle, *Spe gaudentes.*

Things themſelves which are troubleſome to the Soul on one ſide, and which cauſe in her Motives of Fear, Averſion, Deſpite, Envy, do nevertheleſs buoy her up on the other, becauſe theſe Paſſions are not altogether brought to remain without action, and that the Imagination furniſheth them always with ſome means or hope of being ſatisfied. Now the diligent ſearching into theſe means, or the hopes of obtaining what we deſire, by buſying the Soul, diverts and comforts her.

'Tis ſomething for her to ſtrive or aim at ſomething, ſeeing ſhe can aim at nothing but what ſhe looks upon as good; and whilſt ſhe does ſo ſhe hopes to obtain it.

All thoſe objects to which the Soul is carried by her Senſes, by her Imagination, by her Underſtanding, or by her Paſſions, are her Riches and her Wealth; which ſhews that thoſe we call poor, are yet very rich in theſe kind of Goods. Although they have no Palaces, and want even Houſes, they have the Heavens, the Sun, and the Stars, the ſight whereof is ſo excellent, that it hath cauſed St. *Auſtin* to ſay, That 'tis a greater ſatisfaction for a poor man to ſee the Heavens and the Stars, than for a rich man to ſee his gilded Rooms.

We are encouraged in this manner whilſt we live, by the loſs of certain goods, by means of others, true or falſe, which we have, or which we hope for. And as the Body finds always ſomething which ſuſtains it, even in falling to the ground through wearineſs, it finds there ſomething to uphold it; even ſo the Soul, when weak and feeble, makes her ſelf always ſome Prop in this Life; and when ſhe has none that's real, ſhe forms imaginary ones, which, abſolutely vain as they are, do nevertheleſs overſway her.

This

This need of Human help is not particular to wicked men; it is necessary in some degree for good men: For there is scarcely any one so perfect, who has not yet an inclination to something. The just are sometimes weak. Therefore the weak, saith St. *Austin*, in *Psal.* 40. endeavour always to repose upon some terrestrial thing, because a continual attention to God tires them too much: They seek therefore human helps, to refresh themselves thereby, as at divers Pauses. They are at quiet in their Houses, in their Family, Wives, Children, in their small Stock, their Lands, in a Close they have planted, and in a small Building which they have made.

Behold Mans state in this Life, and this state may help to comprehend what Death is, and what Effects it produceth. For we need only imagine, that 'tis nothing else but a Rupture of all that fixeth the Soul to Creatures; that is, a general separation of all the Objects of the Senses, of all the Pleasures we find there, of all human Ties; and lastly, that 'tis an absolute deprivation of all that we love in this World. A man that dies does not lose only what we call Riches; he loses the Heavens, the Sun, and the Stars, the Air, the Earth, and all the rest of Nature: He loses his Body, and all his Sentiments, wherein the Soul took delight: He loses his Friend, Kinsfolks; He loses all Men: He loses all Support and Assistance, and generally all the Objects of his Passions and Desires.

In truth, if the Soul, which is yet so linked to these Objects, find her self bound to God by a holy Love, although the rupture of all these Ties cause in her some trouble, and that she bear the being deprived of Creatures with grief, by so much more, as because of some Inclinations which remain, she cannot yet reunite in God all the power she hath of Loving; she will nevertheless not fall into despair. This excessive Inclination buoys her up; and her Love towards God becoming stronger and more acting, comforts her through hopes of being reunited presently, and plunged into that Abyss of Bounty, which is only capable to satisfie all the capacity which she hath to love.

But

But who can conceive the condition a miſerable Soul finds her ſelf in, which comes to be ſnatched away by Death from all the Objects of her Inclinations, and from all that upheld her in this Life; and which finds nothing in her ſelf which ſhe can truſt to? The inclination ſhe hath to love, and to enjoy what ſhe loved, becomes without compariſon more lively and more ardent; and yet all ſhe had loved, leaves her, and flies away out of her ſight with an eternal flight, no hopes being left of ever poſſeſſing it again. She loſes all, and finds nothing; all ſinketh under her, all diſappears, all vaniſheth.

It is not poſſible in this World to comprehend perfectly ſo wretched a ſtate: All that can be ſaid to give an Idea of it, is, That it is a terrible Lapſe of the Soul, by the ſubſtraction of all her Props; that 'tis an horrible hunger, by the deprivation of all her nouriſhments; that 'tis an infinite Vacuity, by the annihilation of all that repleniſhed her; that 'tis an exceſs of Poverty, by the entire loſs ſhe hath of all goods; that 'tis a diſmal ſolitude, by the ſeparation wherein ſhe finds her ſelf from all Union and Society; that 'tis a frightful Deſolation; that 'tis a cruel Deſtruction, by the ſad rupture of all her Inclinations.

We muſt not fancy Death in moſt part of Men as a Privation of all Worldly things which may be inſenſible to the Soul. On the contrary, when ſhe is addicted to the World, as almoſt all Men are, ſhe is ſenſible of Death in ſo very a lively manner, that all the Griefs we experience in this Life are nothing, compared to that. For whereas when the Soul is in the Body, and that ſhe acts dependently on her Organs, a multitude of Melancholy objects ſcarce make more impreſſion upon her than one ſingle Object; becauſe not being able to conceive ſo many things at once, ſhe muſt neceſſarily diſtribute her attention amongſt divers Objects, or form to her ſelf a certain confuſed Idea, which ſhe eſteems only one. The Soul, on the contrary, having acquir'd by Death a quite contrary Activeneſs from that ſhe had being yet in the Body, perceives diſtinctly and ſeverally all her Loſſes;

Losses; the Sentiment of one stifles not that of another; she applies her self to all: Each Inclination produceth its Vacuity and Grief, which is not diminished by the Vacuity and Grief which another produceth.

These griefs and bitternesses of Death which are produced by inclinations begin in some in this life it self in some degree, when they see themselves ready to be separated from some objects of their passions. And 'tis that makes the Scripture say: Ecclus 41. 1. *O Death! how bitter is thy remembrance to a Man in peace and plenty of riches!* But there are some in whom they do not produce this effect during life, and who die yet quietly in appearance; which is seen in poor People, who die almost all without any regret to life, because being prest by the sentiments of their evils, they think to find some ease in Death: It happens also to many others that they are not sensible of their proneneſſes, because they have some others more prevalent which busie them. But after Death it will be otherwise. All proneneſſes or propensities will be awakened. They will make themselves be perceived, and that in manner proportioned to the activity of the Soul, and the rigour of Gods Justice; which will cause in them this continual Death which St. *Austin* would denote, when he said, We cannot say of them that they are either Dead or Alive, but that they die always. De Civitat. Dei, l. 13. c. 11: *Nunquam Viventes, Nunquam Mortui, sed sine fine Morientes.*

CHAP. VIII.

Reflections arising from this manner of considering Death. That all we have to do in this World is to prevent our natural Death by an Evangelical one.

THe Consideration of this State, so dismal and so terrible, ought not to produce in our minds a barren and fruitless astonishment: We must endeavour to render it useful, by Reflections which may be drawn from

from thence to govern Life by, and to judge truly of all that passeth in the World.

First, This Consideration makes us penetrate the Sense of St. *Paul*'s saying, *Rom.* 8. 6. *Prudentia carnis mors est*; that is to say, The Love of carnal things is Death to the Soul: For that does not only mean that this Love merits the Death of the Soul, as a Chastisement or Punishment: Likewise as the same Apostle says, *Stipendium peccati mors*, Death is the stipend of Sin; the meaning of this is, That this Love is the Death, the Punishment it self of the Soul; because its Object coming to be taken away by the Death of the Body, there needs nothing more to change it into Torment and Grief, seeing that Grief is nothing but the fear of wanting what we Love: Thus the Propensities which Death finds in Souls are of themselves her Torments, and eternal Torments if they last always, as they do in wicked Persons.

This Consideration makes us comprehend what is said in the Book of *Wisdom*, c. 1. v. 16. *That the Impious call Death by their Works and their Words, they think it their Friend, and they make alliance with it.* For what do we else in the World but fix our selves the most we can to Creatures? And what is that but searching after Death more and more?

What St. *Paul* says, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. That Avarice is the Root of all Evil, and that some, abandoning themselves thereunto, engage themselves in many troubles, *Inserverunt se doloribus multis*, hath yet the same sense; they engage themselves in many troubles, because they are engaged in many Affections; they are straitly linked to Creatures, and these Ties are the Sources of Griefs and Troubles, sometimes in this World, and always in the World to come.

What a blindness is it then to look upon the possession of Creatures, plenty of Riches, human Honours, great Employs, much Business, Pomp, Splendor, Reputation in the World, and all that flatters our Senses, and Men's Vanity, as a Happiness? Alas! are we happy by swallowing Poisons, and then must have our Bowels presently

preſently taken out? Are we happy by fixing our ſelves to the Wheel upon which we ought to ſuffer Puniſhment? What can produce in the Soul all theſe Objects of Covetouſneſs, but ſtrong Ties and Obligations, but ſtrait and ſtrict Engagements? And what will theſe Ties and Obligations produce, when Death ſhall come and ſeparate us from theſe Objects, but terrible Griefs? We love this Bed of human Conſolations whereon our Infirmity reſteth; and yet this Bed will become all Fire to thoſe who ſhall not leave it before Death. We love not the World Scot-free; the love of the World becomes neceſſarily a Puniſhment, becauſe the World ſlips from us, and we cannot but be afflicted to lack what we love.

It is eaſie after this to underſtand why it is ſaid in the Goſpel, That the Kingdom of God belongs to the poor of Spirit; *Beati pauperes ſpiritus, quoniam ipſorum eſt regnum cœlorum:* Theſe poor People being thoſe who are not tied to the World, and who deſire nothing of it; it is evident they have not only right to the Kingdom of Heaven, as all juſt Men have, but that they are in a ſtate to poſſeſs it, and that nothing ſhall hinder them from enjoying it. Their Hearts ſhall not be torn in pieces by the deprivation of Creatures, whereto Death ſhall reduce them, ſeeing they ſhall not be linked to them; and Love, which is prevalent in them towards God, finding nothing in them to be deſtroyed, will ſtraightways poſſeſs it ſelf of their Souls, and render them in this manner fully happy. It is not the ſame with thoſe who ſhall be rich at their Death, that is, who ſhall yet have ſtrong Ties to Creatures; although with them they may have the Holy Ghoſt in their Hearts, nevertheleſs the Kingdom of God is not yet for them, ſo long as they are in this State. If they have right to it, the poſſeſſion of it is forbidden them until theſe ſecret Ties be wholly unlooſed.

Let Men do what they will, if they will enter into the Kingdom of God, they muſt be brought to Poverty, either in this World or the next, ſeeing that this Kingdom belongs only to the Poor, and no Cupidity can have

have entrance there. But there is this difference betwixt Poverty, which may be acquired in this Life, and that whereunto the Juſt ſhall be reduced in the next, by the deſtruction of their Affections. The firſt coſts infinitely leſs; if it is accompanied with ſome Grief, 'tis proportioned to the ſtate of this Life, which is a time of Mercy, and of the condition of the Soul as yet united to the Body, which hath only weak and languiſhing Sentiments. But the Griefs which ſhall purifie the Soul after Death, being proportioned to the activity of a Soul ſeparated from the Body, and in the time of the other Life, which is a time of Rigour, will be quite otherwiſe lively and ſenſible.

We muſt not then believe that Death is equally hard to the Poor and Rich in Spirit: For the pains of Death ſpring, as I have ſaid, from the ſeparation of Creatures; this ſeparation afflicts only thoſe who love them, and not thoſe who do not; it is only painful to thoſe who have ſome Obligation to break, and not to thoſe whoſe Obligations or Ties are already broken. Thoſe who are dead to the World during this Life, die no more in dying; Death is to them but a Source of Life; but thoſe whom Death finds yet abſolutely wedded to the World, feel neceſſarily the pains of Death; ſeeing that Love it ſelf, which lives in them, being deprived of its Object, becomes a Torment and a Death.

'Tis upon theſe ſo evident Truths that the Prayer St. *Paulinus* made to St. *Auſtin*, to teach him how to die before his Death by an Evangelical Death, and to prevent by a voluntary ſeparation of Life, the Natural ſeparation which ſhall be made of the Body and Soul by Death is grounded; *Doceas me mortem iſtam Evangelicam prius emori, quæ carnalem reſolutionem voluntario præveniamus exceſſu.* Aug. *Epiſt.* 249.

'Tis in effect all we have to do in this World; for ſeeing we muſt neceſſarily die, and that it is ſo dangerous a thing to put off doing it to another time, our Intereſt it ſelf, Does it not incline us to free our ſelves as much as we poſſibly can from all the Ties which link us to Creatures, and to avoid contracting

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any new ones, to the end we may not expoſe our ſelves in dying to theſe terrible Pains?

CHAP. IX.

The Second manner how to conſider Death, which is to look upon it as the End of our Time in this World, and our Entrance into Eternity. Sentiments which this double Conſideration will produce in the Soul.

ONE of the ſtrangeſt Viſions in the *Apocalypſe*, is that of the Angel who will ſwear, as St. *John* ſays, *Apoc.* 10. 7. by him who lives World without End, *That there will be no more time*; *Quia tempus non erit amplius.* Now if God do not give this Sentence by an Angel to every Soul which leaves the Body, he makes her know it by a lively impreſſion of his Light, which makes her underſtand her time is finiſhed, that there ſhall be no more for her, that the term wherein he has limited his Mercies is arrived, and that her ſtate is ſtopped for all Eternity.

This Light cauſing her to make in a moment the juſt Compariſon betwixt Eternity and Time, makes her ſee clearly, that all the Ideas ſhe has had thereof even till then, were infinitely ſhort of Truth; that her Imagination had given to Time, and to things Temporal, Length, and a phantaſtick Greatneſs; and that ſhe had, as it were, annihilated Eternity and eternal Goods, by the weakneſs and obſcurity of the Ideas which ſhe imagined and had formed thereof. The Soul condemns then all theſe Thoughts; ſhe is aſtoniſhed at her Blindneſs, and changes entirely her Proſpects and Judgments.

Nothing that's Temporal can ſeem great to her, nor nothing that's Eternal, little; ſhe enters by a quick apprehenſion into the Truth of what St. *Auſtin* ſaid, *De Civ. Dei, l.* 12. *c.* 12. That all finite Space, compared to Eternity, which hath no end, ought not only

only to be little valued, but ought not to be valued at all.

This Compariſon of Eternity with Time, which the Soul makes at the moment of ſeparation from the Body, annihilates then in her ſight the reality of the preſent World, with all its Goods and Evils, and ſuffers nothing to ſubſiſt more, as real and ſolid, but the Goods or Evils which are immoveable and eternal.

It will not only be the Juſt and Elect who ſhall judge ſo of Eternity and Time; it will be the Wicked and Reprobate alſo: They will have almoſt the ſame underſtanding of Mind, but there will be nothing more different than the diſpoſition of their Hearts.

Thoſe who ſhall be perfectly Juſt, will not trouble themſelves at all to ſee diſappear from before them temporal Goods, becauſe they love them not; and they will be fill'd with Joy at the ineffable Grandeur of eternal Goods, which they ſhall enjoy without hinderance.

Thoſe to whom there ſhall reſt ſome Ties for the World, ſhall undergo very great Pains, by being deprived of theſe Goods, by the delay of their Beatitude, and by other means whereby it ſhall pleaſe God to purifie them. But amongſt all theſe Pains, the Love they ſhall have for God will maintain them in perfect Peace, ſo that as they would willingly ſuffer all the Evils of this Life to advance one moment their Happineſs; they would not for Felicity it ſelf go out of the ſtate wherein Juſtice ſhall have placed them contrary to God's Order.

Theſe will be the Thoughts of the Choſen in reſpect of Time and Eternity; but theſe two Objects will excite many others in the Damned.

Truly they ſhall know the wretchedneſs of all Temporal things they have loved, but they ſhall not forbear for all that to love them. And 'tis that which ſhall produce this Hunger whereof we have ſpoken.

They ſhall know the greatneſs and the ſolidity of heavenly Goods, and they ſhall ſee themſelves wanting

Power to love them; alſo they know they cannot be poſſeſſed by any but thoſe who love them.

For as St. *Francis Sales* obſerves, *lib.* 10. *Of the love of God, chap.* 1. One of the greateſt Puniſhments which God will make the Wicked ſuffer, will be to make them know, in part, the infinite Perfections of his Divine Eſſence, by leaving their criminal Will without the power of loving them.

This ardent love for Temporal things will then be only in the Wicked, and the love of Eternal things in the Good; but the ſight of wretchedneſs of all Temporal things, and the reality of all that's Eternal, will be common both to the Good and to the Bad. And 'tis a general diſpoſition into which all Souls enter when they leave the Body.

Thus it is that Souls will look upon Time, and all it comprehends in ſeeing it in it ſelf: But this ſame ſight will produce another much more different, which will diſcover to them the price of Time in relation to Eternity.

Time is ſo far from appearing to them by this ſight vile and baſe, that it will on the contrary appear the greateſt and the moſt important thing in the World, as including Paradiſe and Hell, and all the effects of the Mercy and Juſtice of God. They will ſee that all this has been in their Hands by the means of Time; it being only thereby that we can deſerve by our good Actions the Goods which God's Mercy hath promiſed to his Friends, or bring upon us by our Crimes the Puniſhments which his Juſtice prepares for his Enemies.

At what price, think we, will a Soul penetrated by this Light, and meaſuring Time by this double Eternity of Happineſs and Miſery, value the leaſt part of it? And at the price of how many thouſand Years of the moſt rigorous Penance would ſhe redeem ſome few Hours and Moments?

Who then can conceive the ſtate whereinto a miſerable Soul falls, when having this Idea of Grandeur, and the importance of Time, ſhe ſees at once the good uſe ſhe might have made, and the bad uſe ſhe

hath

hath made of it, and that ſhe knows by a lively impreſſion of God's light, that her Time is paſt; that ſhe has no more to hope for; that the Door of his Mercy is ſhut againſt her for ever; that ſhe muſt be judged according to her preſent State without hopes of alteration? Ah! if the Juſt themſelves, who ſhall not have made that uſe they ought of their Time which God hath given them, and who ſhall have contracted ſome Spots which ſhall delay their Happineſs, ſhall conceive a Grief infinitely greater than all thoſe they can experience in this Life, though comforted by the aſſurance God ſhall give them, that they ſhall be cleanſed from their Stains; What can be ſaid of that of the wicked, who ſhall ſee that there will be no remedy at all for the terrible Wickedneſs they ſhall have pulled upon themſelves by the evil uſe of Time? What Repentance for them? What tearing and rending of the Heart? What abyſs of Deſpair?

CHAP. X.

Reflections which ought to be made in this Life, upon the conſiderations that ought to be had then of Time and Eternity.

THeſe are not vain Speculations. We ſhall all paſs through ſome of theſe ſtates. We ſhall all have theſe Thoughts of the greatneſs of Time in relation to Eternity, of the wretchedneſs of it in relation to what's Good and Bad in this World. We ſhall all hear this Decree which ſhall be pronounced to each of us at the Hour of our Death, *There is no more time for you*; and Death it ſelf is only the Execution of this Decree. For to die is to finiſh the Time which hath been given us, and which will never be given us again. Let us not then expect to know the price of Time, 'tis not needful we do. Let us not deſpiſe it, whilſt we have it, to regret it eternally when we ſhall have it

no more. Let us prevent theſe Thoughts and Sentiments which we ſhall neceſſarily have then. Theſe Thoughts are no leſs true at preſent, than they will be at another Day, and we ſhall be deprived of them one Day, becauſe they have been always true.

What will be our Thoughts when we ſhall have but an Hour or two to live; and that it will come into our Minds, In two Hours my Time will be ended, the Door of God's Mercy will be ſhut againſt me? Alas! why do not theſe Thoughts at preſent make the ſame impreſſion upon us? For is it not always true, that perhaps in an Hour our Time will be ended, *perhaps* in a Year, in two; but aſſuredly in a certain number of Years? Muſt this perhaps, or this ſmall ſpace of Time, make ſo great a difference in our diſpoſition? Theſe diſproportions are only between finite greatneſſes: But the difference betwixt finite and infinite is always the ſame. Infinity has nothing of Time. We muſt therefore look always upon that Moment, with the ſame fear, whether we be an Hour, a Day, a Year, or many Years diſtant from it. But let us not inſiſt upon a frivolous Fear which hath no Conſequence. Let us conſider what we would then have done, in the midſt of life what would we do if we were to live again, in the exerciſes of Piety which we ſhall preſcribe our ſelves, if it were in our choice to diſpoſe yet once of our Time, in the opinions which we had then of our former life; let us at leaſt diſpoſe of what remains according to the conſiderations we ſhall have in that Time.

Let us learn at the end of our Time to judge of the price of Time; and from the price of Time to judge of the life of the World, and of our own. For to what end do we employ it, or to what end have we our ſelves employed it hitherto? What do we with this ſo precious Time? Some paſs it in apparent Diſorders, others in vain Amuſements, others in chimerical Deſigns and unprofitable Labours, others know not what to do with it, and endeavour only to loſe it. We part with it at the firſt coming. We ſuffer it to be taken from

from us without complaining. We are libeal of nothing but that. We think thoſe wiſe men who waſte it entirely, in hazarding their lives vainly; and thoſe generous, who loſe it through an opinion of Honour. Mens lives are at all prices, and they venture them often for nothing, that is, they venture them againſt a trifle.

The conduct of Wordly Men is founded upon this ſenſleſs commerce. The Devil in the ſhape of all viſible Creatures offers them I know not what Pleaſures, I know not what honours and dignities. And for I know not what they give him their ſoule, that is, their eternity, and their all. If we have formerly done it, let us forbear doing ſo hereafter, and think our ſelves happy that we have detected this illuſion, having yet time to remedy it. But as it conſiſts in making us forget the price of our life, let us mend and rectify this forgetfulneſs by thinking upon Death, that is to ſay, on the end of this Time which makes known the value of it.

If we are accuſtomed to behold Death with this conſideration; it will make a quite contrary impreſſion upon our minds. For from whence comes this indifferency, and this coldneſs with which we ſpeak and hear men ſpeak of Death, but only that we conceive almoſt nothing by the term of Death? If we ſay, for example, ſuch an one is Dead, or that ten thouſand Men died in a battel, we have no other Idea in our mind, but that we ſhall never ſee thoſe Men more, and that they are become incapable of either helping or hurting us. But doubtleſs we ſhould be otherwiſe concerned, if we conſidered that that favourable time wherein Gods mercy was open to them, was taken from them; and that in regard of the greateſt part of them, the ſame ſtroke which gave them Death, ſhut the door againſt them. If we were, ſay I, full of theſe thoughts, we ſhould have a quite contrary Idea of War than we have, and we ſhould have great reaſon to ſigh and lament, in thoſe which are moſt neceſſary, moſt juſt, and moſt happy.

'Tis likewise by this way of beholding Death that we ought to endeavour to undeceive our selves of the imaginary grandeur we give to temporal goods, and to raise the Idea we have of eternal ones. And to the end we may be less concerned at one, and more at the other, we must apply often to the one and to the other the rule of eternity, which makes us comprehend the difference.

We must take delight in contemplating this rapid torrent which annihilates all things subject to Time: *Aug.* in Psal. 58. *Momenta transvolantibus cuncta rapiuntur, torrens rerum fluit.* Either we pass by them, if they have a little more solidity than we; or they pass by us, if we are more durable than they. *Aug.* in Psal. 122. *Necesse est transeat aut ipse per res suas; aut res ipsius per illum.* But in fine, all is hurried away, and nothing of temporal remains.

Let us say then, whilst we can do it profitably, all things pass away, that we may not say one day, all is gone, *Aug.* in Psal. 32. *Modo fructuose dicamus transeunt, ne tunc dicamus infructuose transierunt.* Let us say it of all that pleases and flatters us in the World, to the end we may despise it. Let us say it of all that appears hard and terrible therein, that we may not fear it.

Let all that disappears, all the alterations we have seen, all the Ages we have past through, all the parts of our life which continually slide away, renew in us without intermission the thought that all is ended, that there is no true good nor evil but in eternity, and that we are so near it, that we ought to reckon as nothing the small interval which separates us from it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The Third manner of considering Death, which is to look upon it as a state wherein we begin to see and understand God.

ALthough what we partake of here in divers considerations, may be united into one single one, in a Soul which quits the Body, and that the same impression of light which makes her see that the World is lost as to her, that her time is finisht, that she enters into Eternity, discovers to her yet an infinite of other objects, which fills her with admiration, and produces in her divers sentiments, according to the disposition she finds her self in; nevertheless it is very good to distinguish in divers considerations this great object which she comprehends all at once, because it is so vast and of such an extent that it cannot be known in this World but by being thus divided.

The greatest and considerablest part of this spectacle, is, without question, that at the very instant that the Soul is separated from the body, she begins to know God in a quite different manner than she did in this life.

For 'tis a strange thing how weak and obscure the knowledge we have at present thereof is. God does all in the World: He is every where; All creatures have their being, their lives, and their motion from him. He guides and governs them according as he designs. They cannot go a jot from the order of his Providence: And yet we see nothing at all of that. God hides himself always in this World under the vail of some Creatures which he presents to our senses, and gives no evident testimony of his presence: so being absolutely busied with Creatures, we never have any other than weak Ideas of the invisible power which moves them.

But it will not be so in the other life. From the very moment that the Soul shall be delivered from the prison of the body, she will begin to perceive the intimate and the essential dependence she hath on God, as to being, or acting, touching her happiness or misery. She will

know Gods power and her own weakneſs. She will ſee that ſhe cannot ſubſtract her ſelf from his power, and that ſhe muſt remain eternally in the ſtate whereunto his Divine Juſtice ſhall reduce her.

'Twill be then that this ſaying of *Iſaiah* will be accompliſhed, in reſpect of us: cap. 2. 11. *Exaltabitur Dominus ſolus in die illa.* He is humbled at preſent before our eyes, becauſe we know him not well; but he ſhall be exalted in that day, becauſe we ſhall acknowledge the infiniteneſs of his power, and our littleneſs and wretchedneſs.

That day wherein God ſhall be exalted according to the Prophet, is the day of eternity, which begins at our Death. From that moment all Men ſhall have a continual proſpect of Gods infinite greatneſs, and of Mankinds wretchedneſs. They ſhall not be able to forget God, nor to miſtake him; and this double ignorance which the World is at preſent buried in, ſhall be abſolutely baniſht in the other.

It is true, that this ſentiment will be very different in the choſen and the reprobate. For he will cauſe eternal joy to the one, and eternal deſpair to the other. The choſen will place their happineſs in ſeeing the greatneſs and powerfulneſs of God, becauſe they will ſee at the ſame time his eſſence, his mercy, and his love, which will overwhelm them with joy; but the reprobates ſeeing only the inflexibility of God's Juſtice, and his hatred for them, and the infinite Power he has of puniſhing them, will find a great part of their Torment in this Sight.

They will not only ſee this inexorable and all powerful Juſtice armed to puniſh them; but they will ſee it for all Eternity, without being able to avoid it. They will ſee God, ſaith St. *Gregory* of *Nazianſen*, *Orat.* 21. like a Fire, becauſe they would not ſee him as a Light: They ſhall ſee themſelves in his hands, as it were in the hands of an Enemy, who will trample them under his Feet, without any hopes of delivering themſelves from thence. Thus their Rage and Deſpair will be turned againſt God, as Author of their Miſery. They will little conſider

ſider all Creatures, and will be almoſt always buſied about God in this miſerable and deteſtable manner.

Behold the State of Men, both Choſen and Reprobate, for all Eternity. And this State teaches us what we ought to do in Time: For ſeeing we cannot be happy but by the ſight and love of God, it being the end whereunto we ought to tend, and that 'twill be our only Employment and Occupation in all Eternity; what ought we to do in this Life, which is only a Preparation to Eternity, but exerciſe our ſelves to know and love God? *Exerciſe your ſelves to poſſeſs God*, ſays St. *Auſtin*, in *Pſal.* 83. *deſire a long time what you ought always to have: Ad capiendum Deum exercere: Quod ſemper habiturus es diu deſidera.*

We ſhall enjoy him in Eternity but as we ſhall have exerciſed our ſelves in the World to enjoy him: that is to ſay, to know and love him: We ſhall not poſſeſs him in proportion as we ſhall have deſired him: For, we cannot imagine, that having always had him far from our thoughts and hearts in this Life, he will diſcover himſelf to us in the other, in this manner, which will cauſe the Happineſs of the Saints. *No man*, ſaith St. *Auſtin* in Pſal. 148. *is in a condition to enter into this moſt happy Life, unleſs he hath exerciſed himſelf during this Life here: Nemo poteſt idoneus fieri futuræ vitæ, qui ſe ad illam modo non exercuerit.*

Nevertheleſs, what do Men in this world, and what do they employ themſelves about? What place hath God in their Thoughts, in their Deſigns, in their Diſcourſes, and in their Conducts? Do not moſt part of Men ſpend their Lives in the forgetfulneſs of God? and do not they even place their Happineſs in this Oblivion? The Sight of God is never the Principle of any of their Actions, nor ever troubles the Conduct of their Lives.

They do not act thus in the affairs which regard the time preſent. If they foreſee that they ſhall be obliged to live ſome part of their Lives with ſuch an one, and that their fortunes or their quiet depends on him, they endeavour to gain him, to manage him, to creep into his

his favour, and to adapt themſelves to his humours. They are afraid to hurt or exaſperate him. And yet although they know they ſhall be eternally in the hands of God, they will not ſo much as think of him, nor take any pains to obtain his friendſhip.

Let us have a horror for this unconceivable folly; and that our actions may be far remote from it, let us endeavour to imprint theſe truths livelily in our minds; let us have only tranſitory ties with creatures, which are all broken by Death; and after Death let us be eternally ſeparated from them, but let nothing be able to ſeparate us from God; for Death will only make us feel more ſenſibly the dependence we have on him; for Man is ſo made for, and ſo related to him, that it is neceſſary that God cauſe either his happineſs by his love, or his miſery by his hate; for in the one or the other manner God will be eternally preſent; and ſo the ſole means not to ſee him eternally his enemy, is to make it his principal care to render himſelf a friend during this life.

CHAP. XII.

The Fourth manner of conſidering Death, as the entrance into the ſociety of Spirits.

ALL that's diſcovered by the Soul at the very moment of Death, is a very ſmall thing in compariſon of God, who manifeſts himſelf to her as we have already repreſented. But as the Soul is not always touched in this life according to the greatneſs of the Objects, but in relation to the impreſſion they make upon the imagination, it will not be amiſs to conſider yet the other parts of this great Spectacle which preſents it ſelf to the Soul at her going out of the Body.

That which apparently makes the moſt conſiderable part after what we have already marked, is that great troop of Spirits, with which ſhe finds her ſelf at once infeſted, thoſe Devils which ſhe begins to ſee openly, that prodigious number of damned, and happy Souls where-

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of God has given her some knowledge in what State soever she be; seeing that the Book of Wisdom shews, that the damned know something of the happiness and the glory of Saints, which makes them cry out with rage and despair: Sap. 5. 3. *Hi sunt quos habuimus aliquando in derisum & in similitudinem improperii.* The Soul then discovers in an instant this dreadful number of Creatures, and she perceives a total subversion of the World which she has quitted. She sees that most part of those who have appeared in that with most splendor and pomp, are reduced in this to the last degree of misery; that those Kings and Princes who have made the whole World to quake, are only distinguished from other men in this, that they are often the most miserable of all: There is no more question in the society of the Dead, of riches, of nobility, of quality, of body nor of mind, nor of those other vain advantages by which Men endeavour to raise themselves here one above another, but that all there is regulated according to the Laws of a Sovereign and invariable Justice which placeth each in a rank of misery or happiness wherein he ought to be, and no one is able to go out of the place or rank which is assigned him.

But the principal difference she observes amongst these two Worlds, is, that that of the living is composed of divers Societies, and as it were of divers Combinations, whereby Men are united together, either to help and assist one another in their necessities; or to resist their Enemies, or to set upon others. But in the World of Spirits there are no more Societies nor Combinations; because they have no need nor dependence of one another. All there have an immediate relation to God. 'Tis he who governs all; and each Spirit sees clearly that he is obliged by his order, and that 'tis not in the power of any Creature to substract him from thence.

Thus in what number soever the Spirits may be, they are in an entire separation from one another. The Blessed love one another in truth with a perfect love; and the happiness of each contributes to that of the others,

others, through the joy they preſent thereby, which makes up the moſt holy and the moſt happy of all theſe Societies; but it is not a ſociety of dependence nor of mutual ſuccours: They all draw their whole felicity from the ſame ſourſe: They find there all they deſire or wiſh for. And thus their ſociety neither hinders nor troubles their ſolitude.

The wicked on the contrary, are in a ſolitude which has nothing but what is diſmal and frightful. They all hate one another. They do not hope for either help or ſuccour, or conſolation from any Creature. They do not ſee in any, either power, or deſire to do them any good. Thus the ſight of this croud of Spirits is for them only an increaſe of deſolation, and it does nothing but augment their deſpair, by giving them a more lively Idea of their weakneſs.

We cannot doubt but that the proſpect of this ſpectacle, ſo different from the Ideas a Soul retains of what ſhe hath ſeen in the World ſhe lately left, may cauſe in her a great ſurpriſe, that ſhe may conceive an extream diſdain for all ſhe hath eſteemed moſt therein, that ſhe may be pierced with grief, to have ſet her affections on ſo many vain things, and to have had little eſteem for what was truly durable and ſolid.

But by how much this proſpect, this ſurpriſe, and theſe regrets are unprofitable to the Souls of the Dead, becauſe their lot is at once fixed by the decree of God, who aſſigns them their places: by ſo much 'twill be neceſſary for us to ſee theſe ſentiments in this life, to buſie our ſelves about this ſpectacle, to mingle our ſelves in Spirit with this croud of the Dead, to conſider there theſe eternal places, and theſe conſtant diſtinctions, this happy or miſerable ſolitude, to the end we may conceive a profound diſdain for all grandeurs, all eſtabliſhments, and all human diſtinctions, and only make account of thoſe ſecret differences which God puts in this world here amongſt Souls by the gifts of his grace; and which will have ſuch great effects in the other.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

The Fifth manner of conſidering of Death; which is to conceive that at the Hour of Death each Soul diſcovers the Devils, and their rage towards her and all other Men.

ALthough the Devils make part of the [redacted] whereof we have ſpoken in the foregoing Chapter, nevertheleſs it is good to make ſome Reflections upon the Sentiments the Soul conceives in perceiving clearly theſe wicked Spirits at the inſtant ſhe forſakes this Body. We know in general, by Faith, that they go about us like roaring Lions, which only ſeek how to devour us, and employ all ſort of Artifices to deſtroy us; but we know not what theſe Artifices are. We have only a confus'd Idea of their Malice and Rage againſt Men, and even oftentimes we ſcarcely diſcern their Voices from that of Gods.

All theſe Clouds are diſſipated by Death. We ſhall ſee in that Moment an innumerable Multitude of thoſe wicked Spirits ſpread over the Earth, poſſeſſing and diſquieting moſt part of Mankind, endeavouring to ſurpriſe thoſe which they do not as yet poſſeſs. We ſhall ſee in what manner they will deceive them, by preſenting them ſome Objects which will withdraw, or irritate their Paſſions, in procuring them the Succeſs which may entertain them in Illuſion, keeping them always out of themſelves, and removing far from them all that ſhall make them know the miſerable ſtate wherein they are. We ſhall ſee them tied faſt, haled along, impriſoned, wounded with a thouſand wounds, and that theſe evil Spirits prepare in them the matter of their Condemnation and their Hell.

Although we ſhall make a difficulty of giving to Souls ſeparated from the Body ſo large a Knowledge, yet we cannot deny but each will know at the Moment of her ſeparation from the Body, all the Snares the Devil has prepared for her, all the Precipices he has forced her down,

down, and all the Illuſions wherewith he hath amuſed her. Now if God, notwithſtanding all theſe Surpriſes, hath given her the Grace to overcome the Devil in theſe Eſſential things; if ſhe have avoided his worſt Snares, ſhe enters into tranſports of Joy, which the Prophet deſcribes, when he makes a Soul ſay in the preſence of this frightful number of Snares ſhe has avoided; *Bleſſed be our Lord, who has delivered us from [illegible] prey to be torn in pieces by their teeth. Our ſouls have been ſaved even as a bird ſaves her ſelf from the fowlers net*, Pſ. 126. v. 6.

But who can conceive the ſtate of a Soul who comes to acknowledge that the Devil hath proſpered in his wicked Deſigns; that ſhe has been as an Inſtrument againſt her ſelf; that ſhe has ſeconded his Deſires, has delivered her ſelf to her Executioner, has laboured only to eſtabliſh his Empire over her ſelf? Who can comprehend her Deſpair, when he comes himſelf with his whole rage to take Poſſeſſion of his Conqueſt, inſulting over her, and placing before her Eyes how he ſeduced her to make her the Companion of his Miſery?

Theſe are the inſults and the ſcoffs the Prophet feared when he ſaid to God; *Let not my enemies deride me; let them not ſay in their heart, Our deſires are accompliſht; let them not ſay, We have devoured him*, Pſ. 34. 24.

'Tis through fear of theſe ſo terrible Objects that St. *Bernard* excited himſelf; De Diverſ. Ser. 26. n. 6. *What*, ſaid he, *will be thy fear, O my ſoul, when being ſeparated by Death from all thoſe Objects whoſe ſight hath been ſo pleaſing to thee, and familiarity ſo ſweet, thou ſhalt enter alone into an unknown Region, and that theſe horrible Monſters ſhall come to thee unawares? Who will aſſiſt thee in this ſo extream neceſſity? Who will defend thee from theſe furious beaſts ready to devour thee? Who will comfort thee? Who will guide thee?*

All theſe Sentiments come from this proſpect of Death we ſpoke of, which makes us foreſee this diſmal ſtate of a miſerable Soul ready at the moment of Death to diſcover theſe horrible Creatures, and which is delivered

livered to them by God's Juſtice, as a prey upon which they ſatisfie eternally their Rage.

The Holy Ghoſt, who hath ſo often inſpired this conſideration to the Saints, ſhews us that we ought to have it continually in our Thoughts.

What is there in effect more capable of awakening in us, this Vigilance which is ſo much recommended to us by Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, than the fear of falling into the Hands of this cruel Enemy? What is more proper to hinder us from following our Paſſions, than to imagin that in following them, we follow the Deſires of the Devil, we labour to eſtabliſh his Empire, we make him Maſter over us, and we become his Inſtruments and Miniſters againſt our ſelves?

For we ought not to be deceived thereby. It is neceſſary that either God or the Devil reign in us. There is no *medium*. Whoever does not endeavour that God reign in him, endeavours to make the Devil his Maſter. God reigns in us when his Spirit reigns, when we act by his Spirit, when we have God in proſpect, that is to ſay, Juſtice, Truth, and Charity. The Devil reigns in us when we are governed by our Paſſions, when we ſeek only our Glory, and our proper Satisfaction; in a word, when there is only cupidity that acts in us.

Thus as Men do almoſt nothing all their lives but follow their own Paſſions, it follows neceſſarily, they do nothing but labour for the Devil, and to further his Deſigns. Horrible Employment! Deteſtable Miniſtry! But who nevertheleſs comprehends all that's done in the World, by thoſe who think they are the greateſt and the happieſt therein.

The beſt means to have a Deteſtation for it, is to conſider the end of it, and to place before our Eyes the Rage of theſe Monſters, when they ſhall appear openly to a Soul, having maliciouſly deceived her. We ought often to repreſent them to our ſelves in this ſtate whilſt we live, to hearten us to withſtand them, and not to follow their Deſires and their Deſigns; and as there are no Temptations wherein we may not be able

to

to make uſe of this means, it may be ſaid, that this manner of beholding Death, is a remedy againſt all Temptations.

CHAP. XIV.

The Seventh manner of conſidering Death, as a Day that diſſipates our lack of Light, and makes us ſee things ſuch as they are.

WE ſay oftentimes of Death, That it will draw a Curtain and make us ſee an infinity of things which we are ignorant of; and it is what we might have already ſeen by all thoſe ſeveral ways of beholding it which we have propoſed. But what I pretend to explicate here, is how we may make uſe of the Meditation of Death, to correct the falſity of the Judgments we make of all things in the World, and principally concerning our ſelves, our Actions, and our proper Conduct.

We are born into the World environ'd with ſuch thick Clouds of Darkneſs, that we know neither our true Good, nor our true Evil, nor the Rules by which we ought to judge of them. Our Deſires, our Fears, and our other Paſſions which ſpring from the bottom of our Corruption, make us conceive a vaſt number of falſe Ideas, as to what they make uſe of as Objects; and as we judge of theſe Ideas, the greateſt part of theſe our Judgments are falſe. And ſo our Memory becomes a Magazine of all ſorts of Falſities.

But what is yet worſe, is that theſe falſe Judgments do not only infect the Mind, they infect the Heart, fortifie the Paſſions from whence they ſpring, and produce all the Sins Man is guilty of. For there is no Sin without ſome falſe Thought, ſeeing, as St. *Auſtin* ſaith, in *Pſ.* 148. We cannot Sin having only good Thoughts; *Non poteſt fieri ut habeat mala facta, qui habet cogitationes bonas;*

Therefore

Therefore as our greateſt Intereſt is to avoid Sin, which is the cauſe of all Evils, we ought to labour with all imaginable Care, to deſtroy thoſe falſe Judgments which are the Source thereof, and to fill our Minds with thoſe true Thoughts from whence good Actions do ariſe.

'Tis true 'tis from the light of Faith we muſt expect it, ſeeing, as St. *Paul* ſaith, of our ſelves we are not capable of producing one ſingle good Thought. But this dependance does not exclude the Application to certain Objects which aſſiſt us to find out the Truth, nor the practice of certain Means which drive far away from us what hinders the diſcerning it.

This is the Foundation of an Advice which St. *John Climace, Degr. 6.* attributes to a holy Father, and of which perſons very Learned, and far advanced in Holineſs do recommend the practice. It is to look upon each Day as the laſt of this Life, and to enter, in regard of all Affairs to which we are obliged, into the Diſpoſition we would deſire to be in, if we were to give an account to God within five or ſix Hours.

The reaſon of this advice, is, that nothing is more capable to put out of our Minds the falſe Ideas evil Deſires produce, than the Thoughts of Death, and what ought to follow. Methinks the Paſſions dare not appear before this Object, and that it awakens all that Reaſon, Light, and Force we have. We ſee more clearly what ought to be done, and we execute it with greater Reſolution, and more Intenſion, and more free from human Conſiderations.

But that we may draw more advantage from this Practice, it is good not to judge ſimply of all things, as if we were to die preſently, but to have acceſs as much as poſſible we can to the Conſiderations and Sentiments we ſhall have at the very Moment of the Souls leaving the Body.

It is moſt certain, that being judged by God at that Moment, he will place before our Eyes all the Actions of our Lives; that the Soul will know what is judged of her, and will in this manner form Judgments of all

that hath paſſed through her Mind during her abode in the Body. That is to ſay, ſhe will determine of all her Judgments and Thoughts, and will condemn all Falſities and Injuſtices ſhe ſhall have committed.

'Twill not only be the Souls of the Elect who ſhall know clearly, then, all their Errors; but alſo the Souls of the Reprobate. For although the Scripture tells them they have erred and gone aſtray from the way of Truth, and that the Sun of Juſtice has not ſhined upon them, it ſhews they ſhall be convinced of their Digreſſions, and of the falſe Lights whereby they have been guided.

If then they do not condemn the Judgments they have made during their lives, through the love of Juſtice, they will condemn them through the love of themſelves. They will be forced to grant they were full of Folly. They will call themſelves fooliſh Men; *Nos inſenſati.* Now they cannot do it, but they muſt judge that Wiſdom would have them do quite contrary to what they have done.

The Judgments which the Souls have of their Actions in that Moment are not only true, but they are moreover eternal, and what they judge then, they judge it for ever; becauſe there will be no more in them what is called variety in Thoughts.

Now what will be true for all eternity, is ſo at preſent. All our care ſhould be never to guide our ſelves by theſe tranſitory Judgments, which only appear true when the Paſſions are ſtirred; but ſo to judge and act according to theſe ſtable, invariable, and eternal Conſiderations which we ſhall have after our Death.

Thus what ſecure Object is preſented to our ſelves, or ſtrikes our Imaginations, inſtead of conſulting our Senſes, our Paſſions, and our ſmall Intereſts, we ought, that we may judge truly, conſider ſeriouſly, what we ſhall judge of it after our Death; what we would have done when we ſhall be judged by Jeſus Chriſt. What we think may be approved by this juſt Judge; finally, what we our ſelves ſhall approve in eternity. Let Caſes of Conſcience decide without trouble

trouble in favour of this light! Let falſe Subtilties vaniſh away! Let vain Phantoms diſappear!

Happy are thoſe who in this manner make themſelves Diſciples to Death, who make uſe of its Light to diſſipate the Darkneſs of their Hearts; and who think at preſent what they ſhall conſider hereafter: Truly, 'tis to be dead to the World to live in this manner, ſeeing that it is neither to think nor act any more according to the light of Life, which is that of this World, but according to the lights of the other life, which are thoſe of Eternity.

We ought not then, after all the advantages which we have ſhewn may be drawn from the thoughts of Death, be aſtoniſh'd that St. *John Climace* hath ſaid, *Degr. 6. That as of all Foods Bread is moſt neceſſary, alſo of all ſpiritual Practices the Meditation of Death is moſt uſeful; it makes the Religious, who live in Community, to undertake the labours and exerciſes of Penance, and find the greateſt pleaſure in being humble and diſdain'd; and as to thoſe who live in ſolitary Places, far remote from all tumult and trouble of the World, it produceth in them an entire relinquiſhing of all earthly Cares, continual Praying, and an exact vigilancy over their Thoughts.*

In a word, it may be ſaid of this holy Exerciſe, That 'tis the Source of Lights whereby to know what is our Duties, an univerſal remedy againſt all our Paſſions and Vices, a powerful help againſt Temptations, a School of Vertues, and a means to ſweeten all the Miſchiefs of this Life.

And to the end where we have begun, It is, according to the wiſe Man, an efficacious means to avoid all Sins. Now as he who Sins not is Juſt in this World, and will be Happy in the other; it follows, that the Meditation of Death is the way to Holineſs and Beatitude.

FIRST TREATISE, OF THE *Four Laſt Ends of MAN.*

BOOK II.

Of Judgment, and of Hell.

CHAP. I.

How neceſſary it is to think of Judgment. Why the Church propoſes commonly to her Children the univerſal Judgment, rather than the particular.

WHAT St. *Auſtin* ſaith to his People, in one of his Sermons upon *Pſal.* 147. *That he ought to ſpeak to them continually of Judgment*; ſhews, That we ſhould always think thereof, being the Paſtors ought not to ſpeak to us of it, but that we ought to have it in our Memories.

We are obliged ſo much more to do it, by how much we ſhall want means to do it after this life. *For*, as this holy Doctor ſaith, *Epiſt.* 70. *The laſt Day of the World we ſhall be in the ſame ſtate wherein we ſhall find our ſelves*

ſelves the laſt Day of our lives: And ſuch as we ſhall be when we come to die, ſuch we ſhall be judged in that terrible Day. So it is true, as he yet adds, The day of Death is eſteemed by each as a day of univerſal Judgment, becauſe Death fixeth the State wherein we ſhall be judged.

From hence it follows, That as every Chriſtian is obliged to be upon his guard, that he may not be ſurpriſed by the day of Judgment; according as Jeſus Chriſt commands in the Goſpel, he ought not to watch with leſs care of that of his Death. 'Tis what we may conclude of the belief wherein the Church is, that the damnation of the Wicked, and the recompence of the Good, are not put off to the day of Judgment, as ſome of the Ancients have believed; but that the Souls who have no more to expiate, enter at the very inſtant which follows Death into poſſeſſion of Glory, and thoſe whoſe Sins deſerve Hell, begin to ſuffer Torments when they leave the Body. For it follows clearly from hence, That as God will not puniſh the one, nor crown the other, not having been judged, and judged by Jeſus Chriſt, to whom all Judgment hath been given, we muſt believe that Jeſus Chriſt will judge each Soul in particular at the moment ſhe ſhall be ſeparated from the Body.

Seeing therefore that we have ſo ſhort and uncertain a ſpace in this life to prepare us for Eternity, which ſhall be decided by the Decree which Jeſus Chriſt ſhall pronounce at the day of our Death, and that this Decree will be the ſame with that he will pronounce at the laſt day; Is it not the greateſt imprudence, and the greateſt folly that can be to ſtuff the Mind with all other things, and never to think of this one?

We need not very much Reaſon to conſent to this Truth; but there wants ſomething beſides Reaſon to practiſe it. We are oftentimes convinced that we ought to fear, but we do not fear effectually; and that there is but one thing to think of, yet we ſcarely ever think of it in effect. Our Hearts follow not Reaſon, and it continues often cold and without motion, even

when the Mind is moſt perſwaded that it ought to be lively touched.

Doubtleſs there is nothing but Grace that can remedy this coldneſs, and ſoften this hardneſs. But as God bids us to have recourſe at the ſame time to outward means, which contribute thereunto when aided by Grace; it is good to approach as near as we can theſe Objects with our Imagination, and to force it to apply it ſelf often thereunto, inſtead of baniſhing them when they preſent themſelves, as moſt people do.

This is the reaſon the Church hath to make us call to mind the laſt Judgment in divers Goſpels. She begins by this means the preparation to the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, whereinto ſhe pretends to make the Chriſtians enter in the time of *Advent*. This is one of the firſt Objects ſhe ſhews to her Children to diſpoſe them to the Penance of *Lent*. 'Tis whereby ſhe finiſheth the Eccleſiaſtical Year, the Goſpel of the *Sunday* which preceeds *Advent* being yet of Judgment; thereby to ſhew us that we ought to begin and end all our Works, and all our Life in the ſight of God's Judgment, and that as our Penance ought to be continual, this Object ought to be always before our Eyes.

But as the uſe of this Meditation conſiſts chiefly in exciting in our Hearts, the ſentiments of fear which produceth true ſecurity, as St. *Auſtin* ſaith: *Aug.* in Pſ. 146. *Terror ille ſecuritatem parit; territi enim præcavemus, præcaventes ſecuri erimus.* The Church judging that theſe Circumſtances of the general Judgment are more capable to terrifie us, than thoſe of a particular Judgment doth propoſe it ordinarily to us; and it is by following her Spirit that the holy Fathers, and above all the primitive Chriſtians, appear ſo buſied therein.

'Tis this that made St. *Gregory* of *Nazianzen* ſay, *Orat.* 9. *p.* 174. That the fear of future Judgment, did not permit him to breathe, οὐκ ἐξ ἀναπνεῖν.

And St. *Ephraham*, That he could not think of the laſt Judgment without feeling a trembling in all his Members, and an univerſal Decay.

Other

Other Saints have had the ſame thoughts and ſentiments: And the primitive Chriſtians had them ſo lively that they took Wars, Famin, and other Calamities which happened in their days, for thoſe frightful ſigns which ought to be the forerunners of an univerſal Judgment.

And indeed, what is more capable to make impreſſion upon our minds than meditating of Jeſus Chriſts deſcending from Heaven, accompanied with all his Angels, to declare to all men united together in the midſt of the Clouds, the judgment which ſhall decide their ſtate for all Eternity?

Who would not be affrighted, in conſidering the ſubverſion of all Nature which ſhall accompany this judgment, whereof Saint *Peter* ſays, *That in the noiſe of a terrible tempeſt, the Heavens ſhall paſs, the Elements inflamed ſhall be diſſolved, the Earth with all it contains ſhall be conſumed by Fire?*

If the ſight of one Angel reduced *Daniel* unto ſuch a weakneſs, which made him ſay: *In viſione tuæ diſſolutæ ſunt compages meæ:* What will be the ſtate of a miſerable reprobate in whom fear, horror, and the other paſſions cannot be leſſened by the decay of the body, and in whoſe Soul there ſhall be no force to uphold the impreſſions of this diſmal ſpectacle, but to feel them more lively?

The Fathers did not make their Spirituality to conſiſt in diſperſing theſe objects from their minds, to entertain themſelves with ſweet and comfortable meditations. They thought they were of the number of thoſe who had need to be affrighted thereat, and they have made very great uſe of them for themſelves, and for others.

I am afraid, ſays St. *Gregory* of *Nazianzen*, (*Orat.* 15.) of the ſaying of the Prophet, who cried out: *What ſhall we do at the day wherein God ſhall enter into a reckoning and into judgment with us: When he ſhall convince us of all our crimes, preſent to our faces all our ſins as cruel accuſers, and place the iniquities whereof we ſhall have rendred our ſelves guilty, in oppoſition to the good deeds we ſhould have*

received of him? When he ſhall demand an account of us of the Majeſty of his Image he had imprinted in us, and which we have quite ſpoil'd and diſfigured by our diſorders? when he ſhall make us condemn our ſelves, and ſhall reduce us not to be able even to ſay, that we ſuffer unjuſtly? Who ſhall be our Advocate before this Judge? By what pretences, by what falſe excuſes, by what artificial colours, by what inventions, how ſubtile ſoever, ſhall we be able to diſguiſe the truth before this Sovereign Tribunal, and avoid the invariable rectitude and juſtneß of this Judgment? He ſhall put our actions, words, and thoughts, into the Scale. There ſhall be weighed the good and the bad, to the end, that having ſeen thoſe which outweigh, there may be propoſed a Decree after which there ſhall be no Appeal, no ſuperior Judge to whom we can have recourſe unto, no means to deſtroy theſe wicked actions by contrary ones, no Oyl to be bought of the wiſe Virgins, or of thoſe who ſell it to light the extinct Lamps with: All will be terminated at this laſt only and dreadful Decree, more juſt yet than terrible, and ſo much more terrible as it's more juſt. It ſhall be when the Thrones ſhall be placed; that he whom the Scripture calls the Ancient of days, will be ſeated in the firſt: That the Books ſhall be opened: That we ſhall ſee roul a flood of fire; that the light ſhall be on one ſide, and darkneſs on the other, ready to receive thoſe who ſhall be precipitated thereinto.

It would be too long to relate the deſcriptions which the other Fathers, but above all St. *Ephram* makes, of this judgment, and it may ſuffice to propoſe what St. *Bernard* ſays thereof, (*Ser. 16. in Cant.*) who comprehends in few words what the others do. *I fear, ſaith he, the ſight of this Judge, able to make the Angels themſelves to tremble. I fear the wrath of this mighty God. I fear the marks of his fury. I fear that deſtruction of the World turned topſy-turvy; that Conflagration of the Elements; that dreadful Tempeſt, that voice of the Arch-Angel; that hard and terrible word. I tremble in thinking of the teeth of that infernal Fiend, of the gulf of Hell; of thoſe devouring Lyons, ready to devour their prey. I am ſtruck with horror with the Image of that worm which gnaws the Wicked, with the fire which burns them, with this Smoke and ſulfurous vapour;*

pour; with those impetuous winds and outward darknesses. Who will pour upon my head a source of water, and who will give to my eyes a fountain of tears, to prevent by my cries those eternal ones, and those horrible gnashing of teeth, those cruel bonds, and the weight of those chains which shall overwhelm, inclose and burn the damned, without consuming them?

But although these circumstances be so terrible, they are yet much less in effect than the impression which God makes upon the Souls by the knowledge he will give them of their sins, of his justice, and of all other things upon which the Eternal decree, which he shall pronounce upon each of them, shall be grounded. And as this impression happens also in the particular judgment, by which God makes the Soul know the place which belongs to her, and by what actions she deserves it; it is to meditate at the same time each judgment to endeavour to comprehend as much as we can in this life, what this light of God discovers to the Soul when he judges her; 'tis what we shall particularly insist upon in the following Chapters.

CHAP. II.

Of the Consideration we shall have of the multitude of our sins. Concerning the two Judgments.

ALL Christians believe that God will make the Soul know all her sins, whether in the particular judgment he will make of them, when she leaves the body, or in the publick judgment he shall pronounce at the end of the world in the sight of all Men. All flesh rings at this threat, that there is nothing so secret in our actions, in our thoughts, in the motions of our hearts, which may not be discovered; he will place all that before our eyes, and he will make thereof a very rigorous examination. Nevertheless, hardly any one will be concerned at this so terrible a truth. It seems that 'twill not concern us, and that 'tis not we who ought to be examined so severely.

It

It happens to us in regard of this truth, what happens to all others: We are at first a little affrightned, but at length we become accustomed to them, and learn to hear them without any concern. It is not either that these truths change, or that our minds are fortified by custom. What is terrible, will be always so, if we conceive it always in the same manner. But the effect of custom is to change our Ideas, to render them more superficial and confused, and to cause the mind to apply it self thereto more lightly. To remedy this evil effect, it is requisite we conceive sometimes these truths in themselves by some Images which may render them more sensible, and perchance that which we shall make use of here will contribute something thereunto.

Let us then imagin a vast Room, but yet obscure, and that a man labour his whole life to fill it with Vipers and Serpents: Let him bring daily a great quantity, and employ divers persons to assist him to make a heap of them; but that as soon as these Serpents are in the Chamber, they are benummed, being heaped one upon another, in such a manner that they permit this man to lie upon them, without stinging or doing him any harm. Let this state continue for a considerable time, that this man is accustomed to it, and that he apprehends nothing of harm from this heap of Serpents. But when he shall think the least thereof, the Windows of this Chamber chance to flie open suddenly, and admit in a great Light, all these Serpents waken immediately, and cast themselves upon this miserable Man, they pull him in pieces by their bitings, and not one of them but makes him feel his Venom. How terrible soever this Image is, 'tis only a weak draught of what Men do commonly, and what happens to them at the day of their deaths.

Man lives here plunged in so thick clouds, that he has much adoe to perceive the most gross faults, and yet he forgets them frequently as he commits them. His Conscience is this obscure place where he heaps them, and he does almost nothing but augment and encrease their

their number, becauſe he does all for himſelf and nothing for God Almighty.

Often likewiſe he makes uſe of other Mens aſſiſtance, as if he had a deſign to gather a greater number together. For there are many, who beſides their own ſins, charge themſelves with other Mens, and who have under them an infinite of perſons who ſin, if I may ſay ſo, on their account; becauſe the ſins they commit are imputed to them by Gods juſtice.

All theſe ſins are as it were ſenſeleſs during this life, becauſe they do not perceive them. They ſuffer them without trouble. They take their reſt. They apprehend nothing. They take no care to get rid of them. And on the contrary only encreaſe every day the number of them.

Death then finds moſt men in this wicked exerciſe. 'Tis this which brings in this light which awakens all theſe ſins. The light God gives to the Soul at the *inſtant of* death withdraws her from this inſenſibleneſs, and being thus awakened comes of a ſudden to diſcover all theſe Monſters which Death incloſed in her boſome. She does not only diſcover them, ſhe feels the mortal ſtings. She is cruelly torn, there not being any of her ſins which does not make her feel it.

Who can comprehend the multitude of them? All thoſe Man has known in committing them, and which afterward he would willingly have forgotten; all thoſe he has diſſembled; all the vain thoughts he has inſiſted upon; all the evil actions he has conſented to; all his omiſſions, the neglect of his duty, the ſcandals he has given, and the evil conſequences of them, all theſe will be ſet before his eyes diſtinctly, how unwilling ſoever he may be to ſee them. That is to ſay, he will ſee for the moſt part that he has done nothing all this life but ſucked up poiſon, been oppreſſed with new troubles and prepared new puniſhments for himſelf.

There is no ſinner who ought not to tremble at the fear of this horrible ſpectacle, which Gods juſtice will diſcover

diſcover to him at the hour of his Death: But there are none who ought to be more afraid than thoſe who are in eminent places, who are to give an account to God, not only for their own ſins, but alſo for the ſins others commit who are under their charge.

What a throng of Crimes preſent themſelves at the hour of death to the Soul of a Biſhop who came wrongfully to his Charge, and hath continued all his life to abuſe his Miniſtry? And who can conceive in what exceſs of deſpair he enters; when he ſees himſelf charged at the Judgment Seat, with as many Sacrileges as he hath offered Sacrifices, as he hath adminiſtred the Sacraments, and performed Epiſcopal Functions; and that he acknowledges moreover, that God's Juſtice imputes to him all the Sacrileges of the Prieſts he hath ordained raſhly, all the precipitated Abſolutions they have given, all the Scandals they have cauſed: And laſtly, That ſhe judge him guilty of as many Spiritual homicides, not only as there are Souls, to whom he hath brought death by the ſcandal of his life, or by that of his Miniſters he hath choſen, or ſuffered by negligence, but alſo of as many as theſe evil examples have been able to caſt away, although the grace of God hath upheld them: Becauſe as many as have relied on him, he has deſtroyed, as St. *Auſtin* ſaith: Aug. de Paſtor. c. 4. *Non ſibi ergo blandiatur, quia ille non eſt mortuus, & ille vivit & iſte homicida eſt:* So that a wicked Biſhop ſhall be treated by God as a Murtherer of all the Souls of his Dioceſs.

But it is not neceſſary to have recourſe to theſe Examples, to be frightned at this multitude of ſins which the Soul diſcovers in appearing before God. Thoſe who have led the moſt retired lives, and the freeſt from the commerce and corruption of this World, have but too much reaſon to fear it, and it ought to ſuffice them to conceive the juſt fear we ought to have thereof, to know that they are to render an account of the uſe they have made of all the favours they have received, of all the truths they have heard, of all the Sacraments of which they have participated, of all the good examples they have

have seen, of all the good works they ought to have done, and lastly, how they have made use of their time, of their Souls and Bodies.

What care soever, saith St. Gregory *the Great,* Mor. in Job l. 24. c. 7. *most People have had to avoid all the sins they could call to mind, when they consider yet that they are to appear before a severe Judge, they are seised with fear, chiefly because of some sins they may be guilty of without knowing them. For who can comprehend the number of faults they commit by the restless and unconstant thoughts to which they are subject? The actions of sin may be avoided: But there is nothing harder than to guard the heart from these wicked, dishoneſt, and unlawful thoughts. And yet it is written: Miserable are you, who entertain your selves about unprofitable thoughts.* Behold the subject of most just mens fear. Now how much greater reason have those who lead a loose life to be in continual fear and trembling?

CHAP. III.

How terrible both judgments are by the annihilation which will be made of all human works which flatter men.

IF Gods judgment be so terrible, by what appears to us therein, it is not less by what disappeas, and which is destroyed and annihilated. I speak not of grandeur, titles, pomps, praises, and all other things men see themselves absolutely robbed of in the other World. I speak of all apparent good works which make up a considerable part of their support, confidence and rest.

For every one desiring to be at peace with himself, is naturally swayed to fancy a kind of conscience, and to gather together what ever is best in this life to be able to bear a favourable judgment of it. But as we do not make this Examen with a design of pleasing God, but to procure our selves human peace, we do not observe therein any great exactness. We judge of our selves for the most part by the outward man, by the body of our

our actions; by the eſteem and approbation of other men, by the example of ſome honeſt men who have done the ſame things as we have; by putting away of ſome certain wicked conſiderations which have not been obſerved in us; by crimes which we abhorr'd, and which we have not committed; by comparing our ſelves with others whom we thought more wicked than our ſelves, and who act what we would not; and above all we raiſe [illegible] Edifice of this life to our ſelves, wherewith we are content, and which we think may ſubſiſt with Gods judgment, and even deſerve ſome recompence. For in effect, divers good works enter by this means; Prayers, receiving the Sacraments, outward works of piety. Thoſe who are in the Miniſtry of the Church may add thereto preaching, directions, and inſtructions, which make them hope for the Reward God hath promiſed to thoſe who have done and taught theſe things.

But who will be able to expreſs how many of theſe Edifices will be ruined, when they come to paſs through the fire of this Judgment, which ſhall conſume, as St. *Paul* ſaith, all the Straw, Hay, and all the Wood which ſhall be found there? What ſhall be the aſtoniſhment of a deceived Soul, who having placed her hopes therein, ſhall acknowledge clearly, by the light of God, the vanity and miſerableneſs of all her works?

'Twill be there, ſaith St. Bernard, De Diverſ. Ser. 26. N. 6. *that what we take for Gold ſhall be changed into Droſs, that the impurity of all our works will be diſcovered, and that the time of truth being come, after that given us by God is paſt, ſhall judge our juſtneſs. 'Twill be there that all our upright dealings which flatter us, ſhall appear horrible to us; that all we look upon as ſmall, all we neglect by a wicked diſſimulation ſhall be conſumed by thoſe revengeful flames.*

It ſufficeth to make us conceive what we have to fear, to ſay, that there will be nothing but what we have done by the motive of the Spirit of God, which will ſubſiſt at the judgment, and that Gods Spirit acts only in us what hath God for its end, and is ruled by the light of his wiſdom; that thus all that we do only for our ſatis-

ſatisfaction, for our honour, for our quiet, for our own intereſt; and by ſome other motive than that of the true love of God, is no more than Hay, Wood, or Straw.

That which is more terrible, is, that thoſe works whoſe ſource is corrupted, are not deſtroyed but in the falſe appearance of good works, and ſubſiſt as ſins. All theſe falſe Virtues being unmasked will appear in their natural deformity. So, inſtead of being the prop and ſupport of the Soul in this judgment, they will only ſerve to depreſs and overthrow her.

How many who think they are rich in good works, are reduced then to a ſhameful poverty, ſeeing all they have put their confidence in, had only for principle, intereſt, vanity, and the deſire of mens good opinions; and what they thought an inſpiration of God, nothing but a ſuggeſtion of the Devil, who only endeavoured to dazle them by a falſe ſplendour of their actions, that he might hinder them from thinking ſeriouſly of themſelves.

Happy are thoſe who in this fire, which ſhall deſtroy all human endeavours, ſhall find they have the ſolid foundation of Jeſus Chriſts love, which cannot be deſtroyed; and ſome little of this Gold and thoſe precious Stones which ſhall ſubſiſt, and become more famous.

But miſerable are thoſe who ſhall have neither this Gold, nor thoſe precious Stones, nor this ſolid Foundation, and whoſe whole Labour ſhall be conſumed by the devouring fire of Gods juſtice.

It is certain that this ſo frightful miſery will happen to a great many, who ſhall have walked in thoſe paths which the wiſe Man ſpeaks of, which appearing ſtreight to thoſe who walk in them, do nevertheleſs lead them to death: and that there are many who ſhall find in the examination that will be made of their actions, that all their life hath been a continual illuſion, and that thoſe pains which got them mens eſteem, were only grounded upon the love of themſelves. And it is moreover certain, that no man can know with any certainty whether

ther he be not of the number of the wicked; whether his works be not such as have only the appearance of Piety, without truth or essence; whether he have not some poison hid in him which spoils and poisoneth them at the root; and whether he shall not see the ruin and firing of them at the day of judgment.

We know certainly that we are full of sin, but we know but imperfectly that we have any good works. We know that we have some fewel for the fire of the other life; and we cannot certainly know that we have any thing that can subsist there.

'Tis likewise this consideration which hath held the Saints in a continual trembling, and given them a holy diffidence of all their Labours. *I will have a care, saith St.* Bernard, *lest I take Tares for good Grain, and Straw for Wheat. I will examin all my ways; that he who shall come to examin, not the* Babylon *of the World which is already judged, but* Jerusalem *it self, and who will judge it by the light of his Lamps, may find nothing in me which hath not been examined. Who will do me the favour, that I may detect and penetrate now in such sort the great number of debts I am accountable for, that I may have no reason to doubt or fear the piercing Eyes of Almighty God? But alas! he sees me, but I see him not; nor do I see my self. That Eye which sees all, does not discover it self. 'Tis then this secret Judge concerning what is most secret in our Souls that I ought to fear. 'Tis this Judge who says, he will judge upright dealings, and who sees at this present that infinite number of debts, which I know not.*

How much more cause have we, saith St. *Bernard*, to be distrustful of our works, and to apprehend the judgment God shall give of them? Yet instead of being always dejected and cast down under the Majesty of our Judge, we live in a stupid repose, and act as if we were absolutely certain of our Salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How terrible the judgment of God is by the ſight we ſhall have of his rigour and juſtice.

IF the form of our Eyes, which now makes us ſee bodies in a certain greatneſs, happned ſuddenly to be changed in that of a Microſcope, ſo as to repreſent worms to us like unto Elephants, and Elephants like Mountains, without doubt this new ſpectacle would cauſe in us an extream ſurpriſe, and yet more if we had the liberty to take this new manner of ſeeing theſe objects for the true, and of beholding theſe ſuch as we ſaw them before, as an illuſion of our ſenſes.

The world would be quite new to us. We ſhould acknowledge nothing therein, and we ſhould have much ado to comprehend how this could come to paſs, that we ſhould leſſen in this manner ſuch great Bodies, as to form ſuch little Images.

Now what never happens in reſpect of the Eyes of the Body, does in reſpect of thoſe of the Soul, in a more frightful manner. For there would always be ſome proportion betwixt theſe two different ways of ſeeing the ſame Bodies. But there is none at all betwixt the Idea we have of ſins during this life, and the other.

We muſt then ſuppoſe that the light which God gives to a Soul when he ſets it before her Eyes, does not only diſcover to her an innumerable multitude of ſins ſhe never thought of, but it diſcovers to her the leaſt of theſe ſins in ſo monſtrous a greatneſs, that it exceeds all our imaginations.

The cauſe of this ſmall Idea we have of them in this life, is the little knowledge which we have here of Gods juſtice; and the cauſe on the contrary of this prodigious greatneſs we ſhall ſee them in the other life, is the clear ſight God gives us of this juſtice. We ſhall ſee even to what point ſin is hated by God, the terrible deformity it cauſeth in the Soul, the horrible diſorder it includes, the oppoſition it hath to holineſs and the

juſtice of God. We ſhall all be convinced of the rigour and the inflexibility of this juſtice. And this proſpect will be ſo dreadful to the wicked, that 'twill make them wiſh for Hell to hide themſelves in. They ſhall be reduced there according to the thoughts of a holy Soul as to a place which is moſt agreeable to them, and where they ſhall be the leaſt penetrated by the burning rayes of this light which ſhall chace them from all other places, and which will only permit them that Abyſs.

Who can then deplore enough the extream blindneſs of men; who receive in their hearts theſe monſters, not only without trouble, but even with joy; who open all the doors to them, who likewiſe often commit vanity?

To tell a man that he loſes his fortune, or that he ruins his health by ſome action, is to oblige him. But to tell him he loſes his Soul, his Eternity, his God, and his all, is to offend him mortally. We employ all our power to hinder theſe diſcourſes, and we make our grandure to conſiſt in being more private than others, and to damn our ſelves with leſs contradiction. You ſee here what the World aſpires to, and whereof it endeavours to poſſeſs it ſelf by all ſorts of ways.

But to conceive yet more lively how the ſight of Gods juſtice ſhall be for the reprobates ſo great a torment, that to ſubſtract themſelves from his ſight, they will caſt themſelves into Hell, it muſt be conſidered that they will ſee nothing in nor out of God, which may not help to convince them of the enormity of their crimes, and which it does not arm in ſome ſort againſt them, by the juſt reproaches it draws from thence.

It will arm the power of God againſt them, by letting them ſee that the more force God hath to puniſh ſinners, the more inſolency they have to refuſe to obey him. *For who is able to expreſs, ſaith St.* Auſtin, *the greatneſs of a crime a creature commits when ſhe does not obey ſo great a power, and is not ſtopped by the fear of ſo terrible puniſhments wherewith God threatens her? Quis enim ſatis explicet verbis quantum ſit mali non obedire tanta poteſtatis imperis, & tanto terrenti ſupplicio?*

This

This ſight of Gods juſtice will do the ſame by his knowledge, his eternity, his immenſity, his holineſs, his title of Creator, Conſervator of men, and Soveraign good, and Laſt end. But above all, it will make uſe of his bounty and mercy to confound them.

For the more they ſhall have felt the effects thereof, the more they will judge themſelves guilty in the abuſe they have made thereof. Thus all the effects of Gods bounty will riſe in judgment againſt them. They are ſo many witneſſes, which Gods juſtice prepares againſt the wicked, according to thoſe words of *Job*: *Inſtaurat adverſum me teſtes ſuos.* And as all theſe witneſſes will convince them of the greatneſs of their crimes, there ſhall be a terrible increaſe of their miſery and puniſhment.

'Tis in this manner that this threat of the Scripture will be accompliſht, all the whole World will oppugn the fooliſh: Sap. c. 5. v. 21. *Et pugnabit orbis terrarum contra inſenſatos.*

For Creatures having been given to men, only to incline them to glorifie, love and to fear God, they become culpable and guilty of injuſtice in making uſe of them for any other end: So that all theſe Creatures being marks and proofs of their crimes, they will ſerve as inſtruments of Gods juſtice to puniſh them.

The Scripture exempts none, ſaying, *That the whole World will oppugn them*, becauſe they will be convinced to have abuſed all creatures, not making uſe of them to glorifie God. They will ſee they have not only abuſed Heaven, the Earth, and all the Elements; but that generally they have made bad uſe of all that is ſweet and comfortable in the World, and of all that is hard and bitter; they have abuſed the good turns and the chaſtiſements of God; his menaces and his promiſes; their Friends and Enemies; good and bad Examples; the Angels and the Devils; Paradiſe and Hell; and finally, they have abuſed their Souls and Bodies, their lives and beings. For there is nothing in all theſe that they might not have made uſe of to excite them to praiſe, admire, to fear and obey God.

If the good turns themſelves, ſhall cover the reprobates with confuſion; what will it be with thoſe they have received of Jeſus Chriſt in quality of Redeemer, and what uſe will the juſtice of God make againſt them concerning his whole Life, Actions, Sufferances, his Blood, his Myſteries, and all his Sacraments and Favours which have been offered and given them, and which their ſole malice hath hindred them from participating of?

This is the reaſon why St. *Auſtin* thinks it is probable, that Jeſus Chriſt will conſerve in his judgment the marks of his wounds, and ſhew them to the wicked, Aug. de Symb. 2. Cath. lib. 2. c. 8. and Serm. 179. de Temp. as it is mentioned in the Scripture: *They have ſeen him whom they pierced. Viderunt in quem transfixerunt. Behold, will he ſay, the wounds you have given me: See here the ſide you have pierced. 'Tis for you, and by you it hath been opened, and yet you would not enter. Videtis vulnera quæ inflexiſtis. Agnoſcitis latus quod pupugiſtis, quoniam & per vos, & propter vos apertum eſt, nec tamen intrare voluiſtis.*

'Twill not be only the Jews, but all the wicked, who ſhall then ſee that they have put Jeſus Chriſt to death, that they are guilty of the inutility of his death for them. That death and thoſe wounds which have cauſed other mens happineſs, ſhall be for ever the object of their deſpair. Jeſus Chriſt will upbraid them with them, in making them know the enormity of the Crime by which they have ſlighted his favours. This is that terrible wrath of the Lamb ſpoken of in the Apocalypſe, which will cauſe Princes and Potentates of this World to ſay, Apoc. 66. 16. *Mountains fall upon us, and hide us from the ſight of him who ſits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*

This wrath of the Lamb will be to ſhew to them, and expoſe to their Eyes all his Mercies, to make them know by that the exceſs of ingratitude with which they have deſpiſed them, and what this diſdain deſerves according to the immoveable and inflexible rules of his Juſtice.

O incomprehenſible ſpectacle of horror! that Jeſus Chriſt himſelf can be the weight which caſts down the wicked,

wicked, his Mercy the measure of their Crimes and Punishments, and that this so sweet and comfortable an object can become for them the height of their misery and confusion!

There will then be no need to dispute, whether they are faulty for not having had the same help as the Elect, they shall go out from before the Judge condemned by themselves, and they shall not have, saith St. *Gregory* of *Nazianz. Orat.* 15. *p.* 229. the satisfaction of saying, they suffer something unjustly. They will all be convinced that they are unjust, and that God is just; that their malice is the cause of their ruin, and that God hath no share therein; that they can complain of none but themselves, and that 'twast heir own faults they did not participate of the graces of Jesus Christ. And although, as St. *Austin* saith, his coming hath been as happy for the Elect, as it hath been dreadful to the wicked; they will see nevertheless clearly, that 'tis through their fault, and a voluntary corruption of the heart; that they are able to impute nothing of it to Jesus Christ; but that he, on the contrary hath right to impute to them the inutility of his Sufferings and Death.

So which way soever the wicked cast their eyes, they will see nothing but the cruel reproaches of their injustice, and they will meet every where Gods justice as it were an enemy pursuing them.

If the sense we have in this life of a single reproach given us by some considerable person, be sometimes so lively and piercing, that it carry the Soul even to despair; what shall be the violence of that which the Wicked shall receive of God, and all Creatures joyned to God?

Shall we wonder after that, That those to whom God hath been pleased to shew in this life, some small part of this spectacle, may be inclined to some extraordinary resolutions, even to lead the remainder of their lives inclosed within four walls, that they may have no other object in their minds but this, as St. *John Climachus* reports of a solitary person of his acquaintance: And shall we not rather wonder that men are so insen-

ſible, that theyare yet in a condition to buſie themſelves in the World about ſo many trifling things?

In truth there is ſomething ſo wonderful in mens ſtupidity, and in the bewitchings which link them to the World, that human reaſon cannot comprehend it. For if we knew not by experience the way how they live, and that conſulting reaſon ſimply, we would conjecture in what manner people govern themſelves, who believe with an infallible certainty that in a ſhort time they are to undergo this terrible judgment, that they ſhall appear before God to give an account of all their actions, and ſhall ſee all we have lately repreſented; we ſhould never imagin that the greateſt part of thoſe who believe all this ſhould almoſt never think of it at all; that it were the leaſt of their fears, and had no care to prepare themſelves for this judgment. There is nothing but the ſenſible experience we have of it, from others, and from our ſelves, which can render this dreadful inſenſibility believable by us; and nothing doubtleſs can make us know this obſcurity of the mind, and corruption of mans heart better.

CHAP. V.

That it is neceſſary to apply the mind to conſider the judgment of God.

PErchance if we were moved too violently with the fear of Gods judgments, we might be adviſed not to inſiſt too long upon ſo terrible an Object: But there are very few who have need of this precaution. The common People are tempted only with forgetfulneſs and inſenſibility in regard of this judgment. Thus nothing is to be feared, but that we may not apply our ſelves thereunto with diligence.

If we had a care to do it as we ought, we ſhould find by experience that there is no object more capable to humble the Soul to Gods Majeſty, to make her re-

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enter into her wretchedneſs; to take from her the eſteem of Worldly things, and that there are many temptations whereof this thought is the moſt natural remedy.

For example, there are few things which make more impreſſion upon our minds, than the judgments men have of us whether in good or evil. It is ſtrange what a relation theſe judgments have with our Actions. Their ſuſpicious, their raſh judgments, their diſdain trouble us, exaſperate us, and diſturb us. Their praiſes, their approbation, their conſtancy, their affection gain us, uphold us, raiſe us, and bring us joy. We rely thereon, we truſt thereunto, and by this means we think we are ſtronger.

All theſe Oblique Conſiderations whereby the Soul is ſwayed towards mens judgments, always divert her from God, make her loſe the merit of her Actions, and reduce her unawares to a ſhameful poverty, even when ſhe thinks her ſelf rich in good works.

Thoſe therefore who weigh well their ſalvation, ought to be extreamly careful of the ſefecret corruptions; and the beſt way to do it, is to conſider often of the ſmall account we ſhall make of all mens judgments, when we ſhall appear before God.

'Tis by this means that St. *Auſtin* oppoſed the deſire of mens praiſes. *That man*, ſaid he to God, *who deſires to be praiſed by men when you blame him, ſhall not be defended by them, when you ſhall judge him, nor be ſecure from your wrath, when you ſhall condemn him, Qui laudari vult ab hominibus vituperante te, non defendetur ab hominibus judicante te, nec eripietur damnante te.*

'Tis true, as this Holy Doctor ſaith, that having to do with a juſt Judge, who will condemn us upon the Teſtimony of our conſcience, we need fear nothing but our cauſe. *Inter judicem juſtum, & conſcientiam tuam, noli timere niſi cauſam tuam.* And it is alſo true, that we have nothing to hope in but our Cauſe, and that all men together will ſignifie nothing to us. Their diſallowing will not hurt us, neither will their approbation do us any good. All that will come to nothing before our

Eyes. We ſhall ſee that we have no need of any thing but God, that our dependance is only on him, and that there is nothing but his judgment which can make us either happy or miſerable. This is the State we ſhall then be in, and that wherein we ought to endeavour to eſtabliſh our ſelves in this life, by the conſideration of this dreadful judgment.

What is there that can help us more to diſperſe the clouds of ſelf-love, and to diſcern, for example, whether the engagements whereunto we feel our ſelves inclined, and the deſigns to which we have a propenſity are truly uſeful for our Salvation, than to repreſent our ſelves before the Tribunal of Jeſus Chriſt; and to examin whether it be more advantageous for us to appear there in the State we propoſe, than in another where it is free for us to place our ſelves, or to continue. For it is indubitable, that what ſhall be the beſt then, is ſo at preſent, and that what ſhall be for us at that time a cauſe of repenting, ought to be regarded in this life it ſelf as a miſery. How many Prieſts, Biſhops, Magiſtrates, and great Perſons of the World, would not be placed in eminent places whereto their Ambition hath carried them, if they had performed this Examen exactly!

The Author of the imperfect Comment upon St. *Matthew*, who hath gone for a long time under the name of St. *Chryſoſtom*, holds that thoſe who labour under-hand for Biſhopricks, do believe nothing of the judgment of God, that is to ſay, that he believed that the faith of the judgment cannot ſubſiſt with the ambitious ſearching after Eccleſiaſtical Dignities.

And it is by the ſame Conſideration that St. *Bernard* ſaith generally, *that the knowledge of the laſt Judgment*, Ber. Ser. 3. in Vigil. Nativ. *is not of all, nor of many, but of few. Non omnium iſta eſt ſcientia, ſed nec multorum paucorum eſt. Do you think*, adds he, *thoſe who rejoyce at their crimes, and place their pleaſure in their diſorders, know or have in their minds that Jeſus Chriſt will come? When they ſhall ſay, beware of believing them; becauſe that man who ſaith he knows God, and keeps not his Commandments, is a lyar.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, Jeſus Chriſt teacheth us in the Evangeliſts, that there is no motive more preſſing to ſtir up vigilance in us, and to excite us to Prayer, and to move us to forſake Worldly things, than the thought of his judgment. For 'tis that which he propoſeth to us to incline us to theſe eſſential duties of piety: Luc. 21. v. 34. *Watch, ſaith he, and have a care that your hearts be not made heavy with exceſs of Wine and good Chear, and with the cares of this life, for fear that this day ſurpriſe you ſuddenly. For this day will be like a ſnare, whereinto all thoſe will fall who dwell upon the face of the Earth, when they ſhall think the leaſt of it. Therefore watch and pray at all times, that you may be able to avoid all theſe misfortunes.*

Seeing then that we muſt watch and pray continually, to avoid being ſurpriſed at this day, we muſt therefore have it always in our minds. Thus the thought of judgment is the ſource of vigilance and prayer. And as vigilance and prayer are the ſource of all favours we receive from God, we may ſay that this thought is in us the firſt principle of all our good.

The meditation of judgment ought not only to cauſe us to watch, but alſo to act. For it is now the time wherein we may do ſomething to render it favourable. 'Tis the Concluſion which St. *Auſtin* teacheth his People, in one of his Sermons. *This Judge who is Juſtice it ſelf, ſaith he, is not to be gained by favour. He will not be touched with pity. He will not be corrupted with preſents. He will not be mollified by excuſes. Let the Soul then do for her ſelf all ſhe can, whilſt there is yet Mercy. For then ſhe will have no more to do nor act. Becauſe this will be the time of Juſtice. Let her do penance here, that the Judge may change his Decree. Let her give Alms here, to receive Salvation hereafter. Let her do acts of mercy here, that ſhe may deſerve pardon in the time to come. Hîc agat anima pœnitentiam, ut illic poſſit mutare ſententiam: Hîc det panem ut accipiat poſtmodum ſalutem. Hic faciat miſericordiam ut ibi inveniat indulgentiam.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of Hell. What is related of Hell in Scripture.

IT has not been poſſible for us to ſpeak of Death and Judgment without ſpeaking often of Hell, becauſe what renders Death and Judgment terrible, is that Hell always comes after them, in regard of the Wicked.

Nevertheleſs it will not be amiſs to reduce all theſe ſeveral Treatiſes into one Draught, and to obſerve directly this hideous concluſion of all the Wicked, without mingling other Ideas which may diſſwade us from it.

My deſign here is not to draw a Picture of it according to fancy, nor to gather together without choice all the evils which the imagination may conceive, to compoſe this ſtate of Sovereign miſery, which is called Hell. I will give no other Idea of it than what the Scripture does. All that I pretend to do, is to unfold it, and to endeavour to make it be conceived ſuch as it is.

Let us ſee then what the Scripture ſpeaks of it in the ſeveral places wherein it threatens the Wicked.

Saint *John* beginning to Preach of penance, to prepare men to receive the publication of this new Kingdom, which had not yet been publiſhed clearly to the Jews, diſcovers to them at the ſame time, what is the puniſhment which attends thoſe who ſhall not take pains to appeaſe God by worthy fruits of penance.

He hath, ſaid he, Matth. 3. 12. ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, *the Fan in his Hand: He will cleanſe perfectly his Flour, he will heap up his Corn in the Granary, but he will burn the Straw in a Fire which ſhall never be put out.*

Jeſus Chriſt made the ſame threat in *ch.* 13. of the ſame Goſpel. And this Eternal Fire is alſo denoted, *Matth.* 25. 41. in that terrible Decree which he will pronounce at the laſt day, in theſe words: *Go ye accurſed into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* After which it is ſaid, that theſe ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment, and the juſt into life everlaſting.

Saint

Saint *John* in the Apocalypſe calls Hell a Pond of Fire and Brimſtone, *ch.* 20. 10.

Theſe words give yet only an Idea of ſome horrible Pains which the Wicked ſhall feel in their Bodies; but there are others which denote the interior Pains wherewith, at the ſame time, they ſhall be torn in pieces in their Minds. St. *Thomas*, after the other Fathers, believes that they are expreſſed by that Worm which never dies, wherewith Chriſt threatens the Wicked, in theſe words; *Mark* 9. 46. *It were better for you, that having but one eye you might enter into the kingdom of heaven, than to have two and be caſt headlong into hell, where the worm that gnaws them never dies, and where the fire never goes out.*

It is true that St. *Auſtin* ſaith, *De Civ. Dei. l.* 21. *c.* 11. That it is not without appearance, that it muſt be underſtood by theſe words, of true Worms and Serpents which ſhall live in the Fire like the Damned, and that ſo it is not a Meditation altogether groundleſs, to imagine that in this Pond of Sulphur there will be Serpents, which will cauſe the wicked to ſuffer in all the parts of their Bodies, Griefs and Pains proportioned to their Crimes.

But beſides that, this Father ſeems to approve more than we underſtand by this Worm, the remorſe of Conſcience; if theſe inward Pains are not clearly marked by this word, they are at leaſt very neatly expreſſed by thoſe which the Book of Wiſdom ſpeaks to the wicked, *Sap.* 5. *The wicked, at this ſight of glory and happineſs of the juſt, ſhall be ſeiſed with trouble, and horrible fear, they ſhall be ſurpriſed and amazed, ſeeing the juſt at once ſaved in ſpite of their endeavours.*

They ſhall ſay within themſelves, being touched with regret, and ſighing from the bottom of their hearts. Theſe are thoſe whom heretofore we have had in deriſion, and whom we gave for example as perſons worthy of all ſorts of reproach.

Fools as we were, their lives ſeemed to us a folly, and their deaths ſhameful, and yet behold them raiſed to the degree of the children of God, and their ſhares are with the ſaints.

We

We therefore have erred from the way of truth, the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us.

We have tried our selves in the ways of iniquity and perdition. We have walked in crooked ways, but the way of our Lord we have not known.

If those are not their words, at least they are the sentiments of their Hearts; and by this means we learn that there will be not only Corporal Punishments in Hell, but Spiritual ones also; that the Wicked will be in trouble and fear; that they will be tormented by envy and jealousie against the Saints, they will condemn their former wandring, and will be seised with a bitter Grief to see themselves deprived of the Glory and Felicity of the Just.

We may add to this, That 'tis yet certain they shall be subject to the Devils, they being called, *The Kings of all misbelievers*; and the Apostle declares, that whosoever is conquered by another, becomes his Slave. I will suppose no other Principles than these, to shew the inconceivable greatness of the Torments of Hell. I pretend only to explicate them by some considerations.

CHAP. VII.

That the Souls shall have in the other life a quite contrary understanding, than they have in this.

TO shew the extent of a Souls understanding in the other life, I need only one single proof; 'tis that which furnisheth the general Judgment, and that Book of life, by which the dead shall be judged according to their Works. The whole Church believes, with the holy Fathers, That that Book is nothing but the light by which God shews every Man all his Actions, and generally all that's necessary as a Foundation to the Judgment God shall make of him. *We must understand*, saith St. *Austin*, by this Divine Book, *a certain Divine Force*,

Force, De Civit. Dei. l. 20. c. 14. *by which every Man's Actions, as well good as bad shall be called again into his Memory; so that the Mind shall know them all with an admirable exactness, that the Conscience shall be convinced thereof by a certain knowledge. And all in particular and general shall be judged after the same manner.*

This prospect, by which the Soul shall know all the Thoughts which have passed through her Mind, all the Motions her Heart hath formed, all the Actions these Motions have produced, all the Consequences their Actions have had, and shall know them with an Evidence, which will not leave her the least doubt, demands yet a prodigious extent of Knowledge, and which surpasseth infinitely the ordinary ability of Men's Minds. But yet this is but the least part of what God will make him know at this great Day.

For he will not cause this great Assembly of all Mankind to judge them simply in the same place, but to the end they may all be Witnesses of the Judgment he shall give to each of them. He will justifie fully his Conduct before them, and convince them all of the Justness of all his Counsels as to Creatures.

Now for this 'tis necessary, That not only all Men, as well as the Elect as the Wicked, know one another mutually; but further that they know what each of them hath done, and why he is judged in such a manner. This Knowledge is necessary for the Just to glorifie God in the chastisement of the Wicked; and for the Wicked that they may be convinced, that 'tis but just that God recompence the Elect. This is what is observed by the words of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. 4. v. 5. *That God will discover what is hidden in the dark, and that he will make manifest the secrets of the heart.* For it is not for himself that he will discover them, because nothing can be hid from him; 'twill be for others, to whom he will make appear by his light the most secret Thoughts of other Men. *Theodoret* and *Theophilact* conclude the same thing in this other passage of the same Apostle; *We must all be made manifest before the tribunal of Jesus Christ.* And the Divines have made it an Opinion

nion expreſſed by *Liranus*, in theſe terms; *Judicium apparebit omnibus juſtum, ſingulis videntibus bona vel mala aliorum.*

But this is not all. For St. *Auſtin* adds, *De Civiat. Dei, l.* 20. *c.* 2. That God will not make appear only in this Day the equity of the Judgment which he ſhall pronounce upon every Man, but alſo that of all the particular Judgments he hath made in all Ages.

That is to ſay, we ſhall then know why this Man [redacted] been rich, that poor; this a ſlave, that free; this happy, that miſerable; why this Man lived a long time, this but a ſhort time; why God ſends ſometimes Proſperities to the Juſt, and temporal Evils to the Wicked; which, as St. *Auſtin* ſays, is more incomprehenſible than when he ſends Evils to good Men in this life, and temporal good to the Wicked; and in a word, we ſhall know the ſecret Reaſons of all that ſhall happen to each Man, whether good or bad. Now as all the accidents in the World are the effects of God's ſecret Counſels, it is evident that this Knowledge includes all that's arrived ſince the beginning of the World to the end.

See here what will be the Spectacle God will expoſe to all Men's Minds, and by conſequence to the Wicked, and which he will make them perceive ſo clearly, that they ſhall not have the leaſt doubt.

If they ſhall have need of ſome ſmall ſpace of time to run over ſucceſſively this prodigious multitude of different Objects, as St. *Thomas* believes; we ſhould always ſuppoſe that their minds ſhall have an unconceivable nimbleneſs. But it ſeems that Reaſon inclines to conclude, that they ſhall ſee them all in an inſtant, and by a ſingle ſight of the Mind.

For the end why God will make them know all their own Actions, and thoſe of others, by little and little, will be to convince them of the Juſtneſs of the Decree he ſhall pronounce againſt every one. Nevertheleſs, if the ſight of theſe Actions were ſucceſſive, that is to ſay, if the Soul conceived them but one after another, and that ſhe had forborn to conceive one when ſhe conceived

conceived another, it would be impoſſible that ſhe ſhould be able to ſee at once the proportion the Judge's Sentence ſhall have with all theſe Actions: This compariſon not being to be made without knowing at the ſame time, and in the ſame moment, the two terms which we compare.

It is very true, That in this life we cannot be convinced of the equity of a Decree given againſt Criminals, without remembring all the Crimes upon which it is grounded; but at leaſt we muſt have a confuſed Idea of them. And that which cauſeth that we have no need of a more diſtinct one, is becauſe the proportion of the Puniſhments, ordered by the Judges of this World, is neither preciſe nor indiviſible, and that they order oftentimes the like for very unequal Crimes. And ſo it ſufficeth to know confuſedly thoſe Crimes to judge of the equity of the Puniſhments. Beſides that, the judgments of Men, being grounded only upon theſe confuſed Knowledges, never have any abſolute evidence.

It will not be ſo with the judgment God ſhall give of the Wicked. For there will be a Proportion and a Relation very particular and preciſe, as to all the differences of their Crimes: *There ſhall be*, ſaith St. *Auſtin, as much diverſity betwixt the Puniſhments, as there ſhall be betwixt the Sins. God will meaſure the Chaſtiſements*, ſaith *Origen, according to the quality, the number, and the degree of Sins. Nothing therein ſhall be omitted. There ſhall be no difference in the Sins, how little ſoever they be, to which God hath not a regard in the Chaſtiſement.*

2. This admirable Proportion of the puniſhment of Crimes, wherein the Juſtice of this judgment conſiſts, ſhall be clearly known by every one of the Wicked. Now to know it, it ſeems neceſſary at the ſame time they ſhall comprehend the Decree, and perceive the puniſhments, that they do ſee at the ſame inſtant all that's uſeful thereunto as a Foundation.

The ſame reaſon which proves that every one ſhall know in an inſtant all things for which he ſhall be judg-

ment

ed, to the end he may be able to know the Juſtice of what God will judge him for, ſhews likewiſe that to know the judgments God will give of other Men, every one ought to know all the ground thereof.

But as God will not ſhew his Juſtice of Condemnation to the Wicked, to the end he may convince them for a moment; but they may never doubt of it, it ſeems that there is reaſon to conclude, that what they ſhall know then, ſhall never be blotted out of their Memories, and that the Spectacle of the laſt Judgment will be always preſent to them, without ever being able to forget it.

We may ſay likewiſe, That 'tis a neceſſary conſequence of the ſtate of the other life, which is firm, invariable, and oppoſite in that to the ſtate of Travellers, where all is ſubject to changing: For as the Soul will not change the Will then any more, it appears not that ſhe can change her Knowledge. What ſhe loves, ſhe will always love. What ſhe hates, ſhe will always hate. All her paſſions will be eternal, and by conſequence all the Knowledges which her Paſſions ſhall form will be ſo likewiſe.

Alſo there is not any reaſon to believe that the Sentiments of the Wicked, expreſſed in the Book of *Wiſdom*, can be tranſitory ones. They ſay, and always will ſay in their Hearts, what the wiſe Man made them ſay. They ſhall be in a perpetual trouble of envy againſt the Juſt, in a continual repentance of their former life. They will never ceaſe condemning themſelves, and conſequently they will always be mindful of their Digreſſions and their Sins. Now if they remember their Sins, they will remember all. For why ſhould they forget ſome, ſeeing they ſhall be judged for all, and ſhall ſuffer puniſhment for all?

It is evident, by the ſame reaſon, That they will be mindful of all the Sins of others. For the confuſion wherewith God will cover the Wicked, in making their Crimes known to all Men by his judgment, ſhall not be tranſitory. And therefore *David*, to expreſs that which he feared, and which he hoped to be delivered from,

from, ſaid to God that he ſhould not be confounded for ever. *Non confundar in æternum.*

Now as this confuſion happens in the Wicked, from the manifeſtation of their Crimes to all Men, it is clear that this manifeſtation ſubſiſts. For if Men came to forget them, and to think no more of them, this cauſe of confuſion would be taken away from the Wicked, and conſequently their confuſion would not be eternal. Thus every one of them conſerves the Knowledge of other Men's Crimes, ſeeing that this Knowledge is part of their puniſhment, which ought to be eternal.

That which makes us change our Knowledge in this life, even when our paſſions ſubſiſt, is, that acting dependently of the Organs of the Body, and the Organs being tired, it is neceſſary that the mind be ſeparated from its object, and that it paſs on to others which it knows by different impreſſions. Moreover the Soul, being tied to the Body, is conſtrained to have certain ſentiments which hinder the continuity of her actions: We muſt Eat, Drink, and Sleep, otherwiſe we fall into Sickneſs. All theſe interrupt the actions of the Mind, and when they are interrupted, other objects take place of thoſe wherewith ſhe was buſied. If ſhe comes to be ſtruck again anew, ſhe does not always look upon it with the ſame face, nor receive the ſame impreſſion.

But it is not ſo with a Soul ſeparated from the Body, or reunited to the Body by the Reſurrection. She hath none of theſe dependences. She ſees always the objects in the ſame manner, and by all their faces. She has always the ſame paſſions, and in the ſame degree. Thus theſe paſſions applying always their imagination in the ſame faſhion, it is neceſſary that ſhe ſee the ſame objects, and always in the ſame degree of perſpicuity.

If that were not, it would follow that the Soul would be unequally miſerable at divers times. For doubtleſs there is amongſt thoſe objects ſome which touch her more than others; for being unequal amongſt themſelves, we ought not to ſuppoſe they will ſtir up in thoſe Souls ſentiments alike violent. So by paſſing

from one object to another, forgetting one to think of another, she will be sometimes more, sometimes less miserable. Now as the Wicked are always equally guilty, it seems that 'tis against God's Justice that they should be unequally punished.

Lastly, It is very hard to comprehend what should stir up an Idea, when the Soul shall once have ceased to apply her self to it, and wherefore amongst these Ideas there should be some more durable than others; so that although there be some difficulty to conceive in the Wicked this terrible extent of the Mind in so many different objects, there are fewer yet to suppose an actual and invariable application of the Mind to all objects which shall torment them, than to imagine that they can apply themselves now to one, and now to another, without seeing any cause of this variety, or that it can be made to accord with their state.

It seems then more reasonable to believe, that the sight which God shall give to each of the Wicked at the Day of Judgment of all their actions, and of all those of others, of the deformity of the Soul, of the enormity of her Offences, of the contrariety there will be with the Justice of God, of the happiness they shall have lost, of the punishments they shall be condemned to, and of all other things which he shall make them know at that moment, shall not be a transitory sight, but an eternal one. What is that dreadful cry wherewith he threatens the Wicked in *Isaiah*, *c.* 42. *v.* 14. *Sicut parturiens loquar?* By which he will break silence which he hath kept towards them during their whole lives, by letting them follow their passions, and live in ignorance of the state of their Souls, and the grandeur of their Sins; and thus there is this difference betwixt God's silence, and this cry of God; that this silence ends with this life, whereas this terrible Language shall be eternal, being nothing then but the constant and permanent impression, by which he will make them know for ever what they are, and what they deserve.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the prodigious violence of the motions of the Soul of the Wicked.

IF it be true, as it ſeems we cannot doubt, that the Souls Knowledge ſeparated from the Body is far more lively, clear and extended than that of the Souls which are in the Body. We ought not to queſtion but that the paſſions do increaſe in the ſame proportion, and incline towards their objects with a violence which ſurpaſſes all our thoughts. VVe ſhould be out of the Body, to comprehend exactly how much the Body out-weighs the Soul, how much it ſlackens all her motions in darkening all her Ideas; but we may very well conceive in this life, that there will be an extream difference betwixt theſe two ſtates.

The Soul is only Love, that's her Nature and Eſſence. She cannot be without Love. She likewiſe underſtands not but to love. But her Love is as it were aſleep in this life, through the obſcurity of her Knowledge. As ſhe penetrates little good or ill of objects, ſhe is not carried thereunto with all her force. Her ſtupidity Acts in regard of her Paſſions, what Sleep doth in regard of the Griefs of the Body. She feels them but little, and ſhe has only cold and languiſhing motions. But when death ſhall have, as it were, awakened her from this dulneſs, when her Eyes ſhall be opened, when ſhe ſhall have lively Ideas of all things, 'tis not to be conceived in what ſort her Love will increaſe, and with what impetuoſity it will tend towards its object. 'Twill be like an unbent bow, or a weight freed from what kept it in, and which begins to tend towards its center with all its activity and force.

VVhen I ſpeak of her Love, I underſtand all her Paſſions; for Love comprehends them all. So this name includes her deſires, her fears, her hatred, her deſpair, her jealouſies; all her Paſſions being only divers forms,

which Love takes according to the ſeveral relations it hath with its objects.

Now as the VVicked die void of the Love of God, it is evident that their Souls will not be found filled with any other Love, than that of themſelves and of worldly things, and a general deſire of Felicity. So that becoming immoveable by death, all theſe paſſions will alſo become immoveable, and will act in them according to the impetuoſity of the nature and ſtate of the Soul. Thus as they ſhall know, at the ſame time, that they are for ever excluded from this Felicity they deſire, that they ſhall never enjoy thoſe temporal things they love, that they ſhall never have this elevation, this honour, and this excellence they wiſh for; but that on the contrary they ſhall be for all eternity, in reproach, in dejectedneſs, and in the griefs wherein they ſhall ſee themſelves, it is impoſſible to conceive the exceſs of deſpair they ſhall be in. And all that can be ſaid, is, That the violence of theſe ſentiments will be conformable to the greatneſs of their loſs, and the frightful circumſtances which accompany it.

For as they ſhall know clearly theſe circumſtances, ſo theſe circumſtances will act upon them, and ſtir up griefs proportioned to the greatneſs of the object they ſhall ſee, and to the clearneſs with which they ſhall ſee it.

They will know that they have loſt, by their faults, this happineſs which they ſhall ſee themſelves excluded from; that others have not loſt it like them; that 'tis God's Juſtice which has baniſh'd them by an irrevocable Decree, and that they are deprived thereof by the ſearching after vile and periſhable Goods. They will ſee that they love theſe Goods, and that they cannot chuſe but love them. And all theſe ſights, being lively and penetrating, will produce motives of rage, fury and envy, againſt the Juſt, of hatred againſt God and themſelves, which ſurpaſs infinitely all that can be conceived, or ſaid thereof.

This is what may help to comprehend the Doctrine of St. *Auſtin*, whereof we have ſpoken already in another place, that God being the Sovereign Beatitude, and the

the Sovereign Glory, does not from himſelf draw the inward Chaſtiſements wherewith he puniſheth the Soul, but effects by the marvellous Counſel of his Wiſdom, that the ſame things which have ſerved as inſtruments to Men to offend him, ſerve him to puniſh them withal, Conf. 67. *Ut quæ fuerunt delectamenta homini peccanti, ſint inſtrumenta Domino punienti,*

And for this there needs no more, but that the Soul know her true ſtate to abandon her to her paſſions, and to hinder her from ſatisfying them. The Soul does the reſt, ſhe makes her Hell, and ſhe makes it by her proper paſſions which become her Executioners, and tear her in an unconceivable manner. All the Ideas which we can fancy thereof, are infinitely ſhort of what it is in effect. Nevertheleſs we may increaſe a little, by theſe following conſiderations, thoſe which are made ordinarily thereof.

CHAP. IX.

Divers conſiderations which may help us to conſider the greatneſs of the inward pains of the damned.

I.

THE mortality and weakneſs of the Body neceſſarily moderate all the Griefs, whether interior or exterior that can be ſuffered in this life, becauſe if they paſs a certain meaſure, they deſtroy the Body; but there is no meaſure for thoſe of the other life. The objects conceived by an immortal Soul act upon her according to all the force they have, and the decay of the Subject does not at all weaken the impreſſion; the Soul being, through her misfortune, uncapable of growing weak; and it is eaſie to judge thereby, that the thoughts ſhe hath at preſent have no proportion with thoſe ſhe ſhall have in the other life.

II.

The Mind of Man in this World, is not always applied to the objects which afflict it; it is oftentimes

withdrawn, and though it desired always to be fixed to it, it would be hindered by the necessities of this Life, and by the weakness of the Body. But all the Griefs of the damned shall be in such a manner continual, that the Soul shall never cease from being glued, and applied to the object of her Pain, without being able to free her self one single moment.

III.

The multiplication of the Evils, do not always augment the sentiment in this life, because the Soul forms only of these Evils one confused object, which makes but one single object, and the connexion she hath with the Body, makes her uncapable of suffering any more than one certain measure. But it is not so in the other; for the Soul being free and disingaged, cannot see things other than they are, she fancies no more these confused Ideas. So as much distinct Knowledge as she shall have of afflicting objects, so much shall she have of distinct Griefs which shall be as lively as her Knowledge, her Will not being less vast, nor less great than her Understanding.

IV.

We scarcely feel any Evils in this life, but such as have something that's Evil at the very moment we feel them, and at most what they may have thereof in the space of this life, which is not long. Although our imagination encrease them often, it nevertheless places limits thereunto, because it extends them no farther than this life. But what causes in the damned an increase of Grief, which cannot be expressed, is that they join to each of these Evils the weight of Eternity. They prevent it by their thought, and unite in the time present what they ought to suffer in the continuance of their Torments, which makes each of these Evils in some sort infinite.

V.

'Tis the effect of Grief to apply the Soul to the small parts of Time. The application to agreeable things, makes Time slip away without being aware thereof. It seems

ſeems as if many parts thereof paſt away all at a time. An Hour, a Day, a Year of Pleaſure, are all nothing; but a Day, nay even an Hour of Grief, is very long and tedious; and ſo much the longer as the Grief is violent. If that of a Man who is cut, ſhould laſt a quarter of an Hour, no Man could withſtand it, nay even no Man would expoſe himſelf thereunto. What length then will the Time be to thoſe who ſhall be in great Griefs; and what will it be for them but an eternity of Griefs, ſeeing that a ſmall ſpace of Time will appear to them an eternity? We reckon Days in moderate Evils, Hours in thoſe that are more violent, Minutes in ſharp Griefs. But thoſe of the damned being extream, they will reckon in ſome ſort Moments, and there are an infinite in the leaſt part of Time.

VI.

There are no Evils in this life, which may not be ballanced by a great number of benefits which uphold the Soul. If a Friend forſake us, there are others we may rely upon; at leaſt we ſee a great many People who do not hate us, and that ſerves to moderate our Sadneſs; when we ſhall ſee our ſelves even abandoned and hated of all, we ſhall ſee yet a haven in death. Moreover the Evils are not univerſal, nor deprive us of all our happineſs. There remain always divers objects upon which we may caſt our Eyes without being troubled. We may be comforted in the loſs of one Senſe, by the pleaſure of another. Who ſees not Colours, hears Voices and Sounds: He who hath one kind of Sickneſs hath not all others, nor all the Evils of this life; and the applying the Mind to theſe Goods, which always remain in great number to the miſerable, weakens, even without their thinking thereof, the violence of their Evils.

But it is not the ſame with the damned; what way ſoever they turn their Souls, they ſee no objects but ſuch as afflict them; they are deprived of all conſolation and pleaſure; nothing appeaſes their Evils, and every thing encreaſes them.

This privation from all good, is a dreadful thing

for a Soul who lives and upholds her ſelf only by the enjoyment thereof, and whoſe eſſence conſiſts in ſeeking and loving it; and we do not reflect enough upon the exceſs of the deſolation, which will ſpring neceſſarily from the clear Knowledge theſe miſerable Souls ſhall have, that there is not any more good for them to expect in eternity, and ſhall ſee nothing but what afflicts them.

VII.

The power Man hath of deceiving himſelf, in this life, adds much to the diminiſhing the thought of his Evils. If we condemn him juſtly, he is perſwaded that 'tis unjuſtly, and thus gives away the good which was taken from him. He flatters himſelf by theſe hopes, and aſſwages his fears through ſome raſh aſſurances. He thinks he is eſteemed when diſdained. He diſſembles his faults. He takes uncertain things for certain. He ſees only what he has a mind of; and imagins he ſees what indeed he ſees not. But 'twill be quite otherwiſe, in reſpect of the Wicked. God will not permit them to be ignorant of their Evils. His ſight will open their Eyes in ſpight of them. They muſt neceſſarily ſee themſelves ſuch as they are, and their Evils likewiſe, without any power to diminiſh the leaſt part by the error of their imagination.

VIII.

Wrath and Indignation which Men conceive in this life, find a kind of conſolation in the deſigns of Vengeance they fancy, whether real or chimerical. They flatter themſelves in theſe miſeries, by the Idea that they ſhew compaſſion to ſome one, or that they have not deſerved them, that they are the effects of hazard, or of a miſery wherein they have no ſhare. Even deſpair and rage have I know not what pleaſure in the confuſed Idea of ſubſtracting themſelves, either from the ſight of Men, or from Life it ſelf. But the Wicked ſhall have none of theſe conſolations, how miſerable ſoever they be. They ſhall ſee clearly that they want abſolutely

power

power to hurt thoſe they hate. They ſhall be convinced that they deſerve all the ills they have ſuffered, that they have drawn them upon themſelves by their own faults; and they ſhall hate the juſtice which condemned them thereto. They ſhall no ways hope to be able to forbear being and living. They ſhall know the inflexibility of their Judge, and of their hearts, and by conſequence the immutability of their evils, and this thought unable to render them more conſtant therein, becauſe they ſhall ſee nothing whereupon they can build their hopes.

IX.

If Mens pride trouble them in this life, becauſe they think always that Men do not render them what is their due, nor judge favourably enough of them, it comforts them on the other ſide, by the Portraicture it makes them draw of themſelves, which is always pleaſing. But the pride wherewith the Wicked ſhall be poſſeſſed in the next life will not give them this comfort. They ſhall ſee nothing in themſelves that is pleaſing. All will fright them and cover them with ſhame.

X.

One ſingle Man who hates us is ſo troubleſom an Object that we can ſcarcely ſuffer him. And when we apply our ſelves thereto a little lively, this thought is capable to take away the ſentiment of all other human Goods we poſſeſs. The conſideration that *Haman* had in the Kingdom of *Aha ſuerus*, and all the Goods he enjoyed there, cauſed him much leſs joy, than the diſdain he thought *Mordecai* had for him did cauſe vexation. What then will be the ſtate of a Soul, who, deſiring love and eſteem with a much more violent paſſion than that we can have in this World, ſhall ſee her ſelf the Object of hatred, not of one ſingle Man, but of God, of the Angels, of the Saints, of the Wicked, and of the Devils, and that ſhe ſhall ſee no ſentiment of affection, eſteem, or compaſſion for her?

XI.

XI.

Who can conceive what it is to hate an Enemy with an unreasonable hatred, to wish his destruction, and yet to see himself for ever in his hands, subject to his power, thrown under his feet, in an absolute insufficiency of resisting him? 'Tis the Condition wherein the Wicked shall be eternally, in respect of God. They shall hate eternally his Power and Justice. They could wish that he were not at all, and yet they shall see themselves eternally in his hands, unable to avoid any of the chastisements which this Justice shall make them suffer.

XII.

There is no afflicting Object which acts a little lively upon the mind, but causes so unsupportable a pain, that it could wish to be no more so it may be separated from it. Therefore all the lively passions have swayed these who have been agitated thereby to take away their own life. Some have killed themselves, to avoid seeing a victorious Enemy, others not able to suffer reproaches; and others have killed themselves to fly the shame of some crime: If this sentiment spring in Men, whose evils are so small, and counterpoised by so many goods which remain, what will it be with the Wicked, who shall have nothing but evils, and horrible evils, without any good. We must not then doubt but they wish with an excessive passion the destruction of their being, and that when their Souls shall be reunited to their bodies, they will endeavour to forsake them; which caused St. *Austin* to say, Aug. de Civit. l. 21. c. 3. *That the first death chaseth away the Soul from the body whether she will or no, and the second keeps her in the body. Prima mors animam nolentem pellit de corpore; Secunda mors animam nolentem tenet in corpore.* Behold then the state of the Wicked. They will haste to death and annihilation with an insatiable impetuosity, and yet cannot arrive at it. They shall hate their lives, and beings but shall not be able to destroy them. Lastly, they shall always die without ever dying. *They shall be tormented*, saith St. *Gregory*, l. 15. Moral. c. 11. *but*

these

theſe torments cannot deſtroy them. They ſhall die, and they ſhall live at the ſame time. Theſe ſhall endeavour not to be, but they ſhall ſubſiſt. Theſe are terrible things to hear, but how much more terrible ſhall they be for thoſe who ſhall experience them?

XIII.

The ſource of all interior pleaſures and griefs is in the Will, according as theſe deſires are ſatisfied and oppoſed. Who then can comprehend the miſerable condition of a Soul which ſhall not be ſatisfied in any of her deſires, but contradicted in all? The Will ſhall be then Sovereignly acting, but ſhe ſhall have nevertheleſs no motion which afflicts her not. She ſhall obtain nothing at all of what ſhe ſhall deſire. She ſhall ſuffer all that ſhe hath an horror for. This is the argument St. *Bernard* makes uſe of to ſhew the exceſs of this miſery: Lib. 5. de Conſid. c. 1. *Quid tam pœnale quam ſemper velle quod nunquam erit? Quid tam damnatum quam voluntas addicta huic neceſſitati volendi nolendique, ut adutrumlibet. Jam ſicut non niſi perverſe, ita non niſi miſere moveatur. In æternum non obtinebit quod vult; & quod non vult in æternum nihilominus ſuſtinebit.*

CHAP. X.

Of the pain of Fire.

AS Men have a very great Idea of grief which Fire cauſes, the imagination can ſcarcely advance any further; they are inclined to leſſen this Idea, by changing the Fire wherewith God threatens the Wicked, into a Spiritual and Metaphorical Fire, which they think is not near ſo grievous.

This hath cauſed the opinion of thoſe who have pretended, as St. *Auſtin* reports, that Hell Fire ſhall be no other thing than a trouble for the loſs of Eternal happineſs, wherewith the Wicked ſhall be afflicted; which they ground, in reſpect of the Devils and Souls ſepara-

ted

ted from the body upon this argument, that 'tis impoſſible for a material Fire to act upon Beings abſolutely Spiritual, as the Devils are.

But it is eaſie to ſhew that this opinion is as little ſolid, according to the light of reaſon, as it ſeems contrary to Scripture and Tradition. For how little ſoever we examin what it is we call grief, we ſhall find that 'tis altogether as conceivable, that Spirits without bodies are as ſuſceptible thereof, as Spirits joyned to bodies.

Some ask how the Fire can act upon the Devils? And I demand how it can act upon living Souls, which are no leſs Spiritual than Devils and Angels? For 'tis not the body that feels pains. Let the Soul be applied elſewhere, you may burn the body if you will, it will feel nothing of pain, as it happens in certain extraordinary ſickneſſes. It is true, that this pain paſſeth from the Body to the Soul, that is to ſay, that the motion which is made in the Body, ſtirs up in the Soul this ſentiment which is called grief. But it is not through a neceſſary conſequence of this corporal motion, which has no connection with this ſentiment; 'tis by the Decree of Gods Will, who hath eſtabliſht that this ſentiment ſhould be excited in the Soul, at the ſame time as this corporal motion ſhould be in the Body. 'Tis impoſſible to find any other reaſon for it, and there is no more to be done but to make uſe of it to ſhew how the Devils may feel the impreſſions of a material Fire. For likewiſe 'tis only to ſay that God hath ordained they ſhall have this ſenſe of grief when ſuch and ſuch a motion ſhall be in the ſubſtance wherein they ſhall be incloſed.

There is then no neceſſity, even according to reaſon, to conceive another Fire than what we know, nor another grief than what we experience when acting upon the body.

The Devils are as ſuſceptible thereof as Men, and ſo 'tis not ſtrange at all that the Reprobates and Devils may be threatned with the ſame Fire by the Decree of their Judge: *Ite maledicti in Ignem æternum qui paratus eſt Diabolis & Angelis ejus.*

By

By taking therefore this Fire which ſhall cauſe the puniſhment of the Wicked for a true and coporal Fire, it ſeems that we ought not to be much troubled to augment the Idea of grief it may cauſe, ſeeing that we conceived it already as ſomething unſupportable, and that the cruelty of the moſt barbarous Men were not able to invent greater torments.

Nevertheleſs the Fathers aſſure us that this Fire hath infinitely more force and activity than ours, and that the pain this ordinary Fire cauſes is nothing in compariſon to that Hell Fire cauſeth. *Non erit iſte Ignis ſicut focus tuus*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*. And reaſon inclines us to conclude it from ſome circumſtances of the ſtate of the other life.

For the grief this Fire cauſeth, is not a ſimple action of the Fire upon the Body. It is the application of the Soul to this motion. If ſhe did not apply her ſelf to it at all, ſhe would ſuffer nothing at all, and ſhe feels more of it in proportion as ſhe applies her ſelf more to it. Now 'tis certain, the application of the Soul in this life is always weak, becauſe of the Organs of the body whereof ſhe depends, which being weak and delicate will deſtroy themſelves by too violent action. But in the other life the organs of the Body being incorruptible, the Soul will apply her ſelf to the objects which will cauſe her grief with all the activity of her nature.

The Fire of this life never acts univerſally upon the whole body; otherwiſe it would deſtroy it in a moment, and would hardly cauſe any grief or pain. It muſt, to the end we may feel it lively, act only upon ſome few parts, and render them in a ſhort time inſenſible, by conſuming them. But if it did act upon all the parts without deſtroying the body, it would doubtleſs be a redoubling of the pain. And it is properly what ſhall come to paſs in Hell. They ſhall be, *ſaith the Evangeliſt*, abſolutely penetrated with Fire, as Fleſh ſalted is penetrated with Salt. *Omnis enim Igne ſalietur, & omnis victima ſale ſalietur.* The Fire will act upon all the parts of their bodies, as it acts upon all the parts of a red hot Iron. There will be neither

neither nerves, fibres, nor tendons, which ſhall not be moved, and cauſe a violent pain. And as none of theſe parts will ever be conſumed by the Fire, but will remain always in the ſame agitation, the puniſhment will always ſubſiſt in the ſame violence.

This pain will be ſo much greater, as it is properly that which ſhall be impoſed upon them by Gods juſtice, and where it ſhall act by it ſelf, all other pains being nothing but conſequences of their wretchedneſs and malice, except God act there otherwiſe than by leaving them to themſelves.

I ſhall make no difficulty to relate here what St. *Teresa* ſaid of a Viſion by which God ſhewed her ſomething of the puniſhment of Hell; and I am not afraid to ſay, that 'twould be a violating of the mind not to be affrighted at it, and to think it but an imagination. We ſhould be aſſured that 'twas one, to have reaſon to ſlight it. Now we are very far from being able to have this aſſurance in reſpect of ſome Viſions which ſhe relates. On the contrary, we may truly ſay, that there being two things which may be doubted of in theſe kind of things; Firſt, If the perſon who relates them be ſincere; Secondly, Whether it is not an illuſion of the Imagination; perſons of ſenſe who ſhall examin without prevention, the works of this illuſtrious Saint, will be preſently fully convinced of the firſt, which is her real ſincerity; and in regard of the other, they will have much ado to perſwade themſelves, that imaginations put Souls in a ſtate and condition ſo Holy and ſo Divine as that wherein it ſeems God placed her by theſe Viſions, nor that God was willing to joyn ſo many miraculous effects to phanatical illuſions.

See then in what ſort ſhe tells what God ſhewed her concerning the pains of Hell. *Life of St.* Tereſa, c. 32.

Being one day in Prayer, ſaid ſhe, I found my ſelf in an inſtant in Hell, without being ſenſible how I was carried thither. I only comprehended that it pleaſed God I ſhould ſee the place which the Devils had prepared for me, and my ſins deſerved. That laſted but a very ſhort while. But although

although I ſhould live yet many years, I do not believe that it would be poſſible for me to forget it.

The entrance appeared to me like one of thoſe little narrow long Streets which are ſhut at one end, and ſuch as would be that of an Oven, very low, very cloſe, and very obſcure. The bottom ſeemed to me to be as it were very filthy dirt, of an inſupportable ſtench. and full of a great number of venomous creeping creatures. At the end of this Street was a hollow made in the Wall, in form of a Niech, wherein I ſaw my ſelf lodged very cloſe. And although all I have now ſaid were yet much more frightful than I repreſent it, it may paſs for pleaſing in compariſon of what I ſuffered when I was in this kind of Niech.

This torment was ſo terrible, that all that can be ſaid cannot repreſent the leaſt part of it. I felt my Soul burn in ſo horrible a Fire, that I had much ado to deſcribe it ſuch as it was, ſeeing that I could not even conceive it. I have experienced the pains the moſt unſupportable by relation of Phyſicians, that can be endured in this life, as well by this contraction of the nerves, as in many other ways, by other evils than the Devils have made me feel; but all thoſe pains are nothing in compariſon to what I ſuffered then, joyned with the horror I had to ſee that thoſe pains were eternal; and even that is yet but little, compared to the pain and agony wherein the Soul finds her ſelf. She thinks ſhe is choacked, ſtrangled; and her affliction and deſpair go to ſuch an exceſs, that I ſhould undertake in vain to relate them. 'Tis nothing to ſay that it ſeemed ſhe was torn in pieces, becauſe that would be a ſtrange violence which would take away her life, whereas 'tis ſhe that tears and cuts her ſelf in pieces. As to that interior Fire and deſpair which are as it were the heighth of ſo many horrible torments, I confeſs I am leſs able to repreſent them, I know not what made me endure them; but I felt my ſelf burn, and as it were hacked in pieces; which me thought was the moſt terrible pain of all.

In ſo frightful a place, there remains not the leaſt hopes of receiving any conſolation, nor is there room enough either to ſit or to lie down in. I was there as in a hole made in the Wall, and theſe horrible Walls (againſt the order of nature) ſqueeze and preſs what they incloſe. All is ſtifled in that

place.

place. There are nothing but thick clouds without any mixture of light, and I do not comprehend how it can happen that, whereas there is no light there, we ſhould ſee what is moſt troubleſome to the ſight.

Although it be about ſix years that what I even now related happened, I am yet ſo frightned at it in writing it, that methinks my Blood is frozen with fear in my Veins. Then what evils and pains ſoever I experience, I cannot remember what I ſuffered then, but all that can be endured here muſt ſeem nothing. It ſeems to me that we complain without a cauſe. And I conſider as one of the greateſt favours, that God hath ſhewn me a thing ſo terrible as that which I have related, when I conſider how much it hath profited me, as well to hinder me from apprehending the afflictions of this life, as to oblige me to ſuffer with patience, and to give God thanks, for that I have cauſe to believe that he will deliver me from theſe terrible and dreadful pains, whoſe continuation will be eternal.

Doubtleſs God ſhewed to this Saint only the Image of a part of Hell, and ſo much as was requiſite for the good of her Soul. So we have reaſon to conclude that Hell in all reality is quite another thing than this Image ſhe hath drawn thereof.

CHAP. XI.

Conſequences that ought to be drawn from the Conſiderations of theſe pains.

I Do not pretend to ſhew at large here all the conſequences which reaſon may draw from this frightful ſtate which we have newly repreſented, and wherewith all men are threatned; for there is hardly any thing in morality which does not follow it. I pretend only to ſhew ſome of the moſt groſs and moſt ſenſible of them, and principally thoſe which the Fathers themſelves have drawn from thence.

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The first of these thoughts which ought to be given us, is, that 'tis not only Faith and Religion that condemns the Conduct of those who believing that there is a Hell to be feared, do not make it their principal care to avoid it; but that it ought to appear intirely unreasonable according to the ordinary understanding of common sense.

Truly there is something in the vanity of human mind which may incline to approve and esteem a Man who seeing himself condemned, and no hopes of avoiding it, nor any consideration of the other life, should employ three or four hours which he shall have at the time of execution, in playing and diverting himself. And this is that which makes us not troubled at the praises *Seneca* gives to a Roman named *Canius*, who expecting that *Caligula*'s Ministers should come to execute the Decree of death which he had given against him, was busied about playing at Chess.

But if on the one side the punishment of this Man was horrible, and if on the other he might avoid it by employing three or four hours in doing juster and lawfuller actions, is there any Man would not count him a fool and an extravagant fellow, if the love of a ridiculous pastime should hinder him from embracing so lawful means to avoid so shameful and cruel a death?

However this resolution which we never take in regard of Temporal death, is taken daily in regard of Eternal. We expose our selves thereto, we throw our selves headlong thereinto, for pleasures, interests, for honours, which have not so much proportion to this dreadful misery whereto we engage our selves, as three hours of play have to a cruel death. Also St. *Austin* having represented in one of his Sermons the excess of this disorder of Mans mind, concludes expressly, that Faith must be blotted out of them.

Hell Fire, saith this holy Doctor, *shall not be like to that which you may feel here below. And yet if you be threatned to have your hand burnt, you will use all your endeavours, how bad soever, to avoid it. God to oblige you*

to do well, threatens you Eternal miſchief, if you do not, and yet you do not do it. The threats of ſome evil, whatever it may be, ſhould not be able to engage you to do ill, no more than hinder you from doing well: And God himſelf does not threaten you with any thing leſs than Eternal Fire, if you do ill, and do not do good. From whence then comes it that you make ſo little account of theſe threats? 'Tis doubtleſs becauſe you have not faith.

Indeed we muſt believe nothing at all of that Faith which makes impreſſion upon the heart: But it may be done yet, and it happens even very often, that we do not ceaſe to believe it by another perſwaſion which is only in the mind. Thus we believe it and we do not believe it. The heart cauſes in the mind falſe judgments conformable to its inclinations. It makes it prefer the preſent before that that's to come, and to look upon the goods and evils of this life as ſomething more real than all that can be ſaid of the goods of the other, and reaſon ſuffers not at the ſame time to conclude the contrary, but after ſo cold and ſpeculative a manner, that it is not capable to withold the inclinations of the heart.

Nevertheleſs, when we are careful to fortifie our Reaſon in applying it more to theſe Objects, the fear we have of it becomes capable thereby to retain at leaſt the hand, if it does not cure the heart, and ſo cut off the outward effects of the paſſions, if it do not ſtop the inward motions; and in ſeparating us thus from the Objects which encreaſe concupiſcence, it prepares the place for Charity.

'Tis by means of this fear, animated by the hopes of recompences which God promiſes to the juſt, that we are capable of diſdaining all the promiſes of Men. *Tremble*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, *at the evils wherewith the Almighty threatens you. Love what he promiſeth you, and you will not value Mens promiſes nor threats.* (In Epiſt. Joan. Tr. 3.) *Exhorreſce quod minatur Omnipotens. Ama quod promittit Omnipotens, & vileſcit omnis Mundus ſive promittens ſive terrens.*

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For all this we ought to labour strongly to establish our selves in this principle, whereof reason cannot doubt, provided that it give attention to it, that the evils of the other life being so horrible and so far surpassing the greatness of all the goods and evils of this present life, they ought to serve us as a rule and measure to judge of these here, and that this we ought not at all to behold under the Idea of good, but under the Idea of a great evil, all that leads to Hell.

'Tis then by this means we must judge of the difference of the states, and conditions of this World. All those wherein it is difficult to save our selves, ought to appear misfortunate to us; and we ought on the contrary to look upon as advantageous all those which are favourable to salvation.

It is by this we ought to rule our joy and sadness, in all successes and in all accidents that happen to us. For to know whether we have reason to rejoyce or to be afrighted thereat, we need only ask our selves whether they render salvation easie or difficult to us.

These are common Truths. But 'tis not a common thing to have them livelily imprinted in the mind, to conform our judgments and actions therennto, to look upon all Worldly things by a light which we draw from thence.

'Tis also a very common thought to say as St. *Austin* did, that we ought to make use of the consideration of Hell to despise and set at nought all the Evils of the Body. Tom. 9. de verbis Excid. cap. 4. *Unusquisque Christianus quando aliquam afflictionem Corporis patitur, Gehennam cogitet, & videat quam leve est quod patitur.* But 'tis not very common to reduce it into practice.

What St. *Austin* saith in another place upon this Subject, gives us reason to add, that as Hell ought to make us despise all the evils of this life, so the evils of this life ought to make us remember Hell, and to make use of it as a continual advertisement to think seriously how to avoid it. For this holy Doctor doth teach us in one of his Sermons, that light chastisements in this life only tend to

put us in mind of amending, to the end that God may have reaſon to puniſh us in his rigour; that this Sovereign Judge may make us know thereby that he will come preſently, and that this conduct is an effect of the deſign he hath, that we may not be abſolutely loſt. *If he had a deſign*, ſaith he, *to condemn us, he would be ſilent. Never any one, having a deſign to ſtrike another, cries out unto him, Have a care.*

Thus as it is evident that the Earth is full of Gods chaſtiſements, and that there is none who ſometimes does not experience them; it follows, that God makes this terrible, but wholſom voice, Eccho over all the Earth, That Hell is at hand, and the Judge comes. Mortals, *ſaith he to them thereby*, have a care of your ſelves, and baniſh from your hearts all that may condemn you to the Eternal Fire. Behold what theſe Scourges God ſends over the Earth, theſe Wars, theſe Plagues, theſe Famines, theſe Calamities both publick and particular, ſignifie. They are like Sparks which exalt themſelves from Hell Fire, which is the Treaſury of Gods wrath. But 'tis by counſel of mercy he permits them to go out, that he may give us notice by that means to ſhun theſe terrible Fires wherein he will caſt the Wicked headlong in the other life.

Even when theſe proſpects of Hell ſhall not be neceſſary to make us flie ſin, and that we ſhall arrive to that Degree where Charity baniſheth all fear, which is very rare in this World, and where it is very dangerous to imagin to arrive when God has not as yet raiſed us thereunto; they would nevertheleſs be uſeful and neceſſary for us, as well to entertain in us the ſentiments of acknowledging that we ought to have them, as to excite thereby a compaſſion we ought to have for Souls who precipitate themſelves into this Abyſs of evils. And it is but reading what Saint *Tereſa* ſaid upon this Subject with that inimitable eloquence which ſprung from the zeal of her Charity, to judge what this Conſideration ſhould produce in us if we had as much Charity as ſhe.

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How, saith she, Meditat. 11. upon the Command, *can I be able to express what my grief is, when I represent to my self the State of a Soul, who having seen her self in the World always considerable, always loved, always obeyed, always caressed, always respected, at the very moment she leaves this life, shall see she is lost for ever, and shall clearly comprehend that her misery shall never have end: that it will assist her nothing at all to divert her mind with the Truths of Faith, as she was accustomed to do; she shall see her self separated, and as it were forced from her recreations and pleasures, even when she shall think she hath not as yet begun to taste them, because in effect all that's acted in this life is nothing but a blast and a vapour; she shall see her self environ'd with this so hideous and cruel company with which she must suffer Eternally; she shall see her self plunged into a stinking Lake full of Serpents which shall exercise upon her all their rage and fury; And lastly, she shall find her self as it were swallowed up in this horrible obscurity, which having nothing but a darksom flame as a light, shall not permit her to see any thing but what may maintain for ever, her pains and torments.*

O how inconsiderable is what I say to what it is! O Lord! and who then hath cast in this manner dirt into the Eyes of the Soul, that she hath not perceived this dismal state until she should see her self reduced thereunto for ever? Who hath stopped their Ears in such a manner, that they cannot hear what has been told them a thousand and a thousand times of the greatness and eternity of these torments? O life eternally miserable! O punishments without end? Is it possible that those do not fear you at all, who fear the least inconveniencies of the body, that they cannot suffer with patience one nights lodging in a hard bed?

O Lord! how I regret the time wherein I have not comprehended these truths! But, O God, seeing thou knowest the displeasure I suffer in seeing the great number of those who will not understand them, make at least, I conjure thee, that thy light may illuminate some Soul which may be capable to inlighten many others. I do not ask thee, O my God, to do it for the love of me, being unworthy thereof: But I beg it through the merits of thy Son. Cast thy Eyes, O my

God, upon his wounds. And when he hath pardoned them, pardon us also the sins we have committed against thee.

Thus as it appears by the example of this Saint, the fear of Hell is not only the Introduction of Charity, when it is not as yet Mistress of the Heart; it is not only the Guardian thereof, when it is yet very feeble and imperfect; it is also the nourishment thereof, when it is purest and most perfect, with this sole difference, that in the two first states it looks upon us more than others, and in the third, upon others more than us.

FIRST

FIRST TREATISE, OF THE *Four Laſt Ends of MAN.*

BOOK III.

Of Paradiſe, or Heaven.

CHAP. I.

That it is profitable to treat of Heaven having treated of Hell. How much the knowledge of theſe two great Objects is linked to that of Mans nature.

AFter the fear of torments, nothing makes more impreſſion upon Mens minds than the hopes of recompence, which has given occaſion to thoſe who made Laws, to joyn ordinarily theſe two Motives together, to keep Men in their duty.

God follows almoſt the ſame order in the operations of his Grace. For having ſhaken the heart by the fear of Torments wherewith he threatens the Wicked, he draws it to him ſelf by the hopes of the glory he promiſeth to the juſt.

To follow then the ſame Degrees, reaſon commands, that having propoſed the fitteſt Objects to fill the Soul with terror, which are Death, Judgment, and Hell; we propoſe to them thoſe which are the propereſt to attract their deſires, which are the ineffable and eternal goods God hath reſerved for his Choſen.

It is much more neceſſary to joyn theſe Objects together, by how much we know not how in any ſort to conceive them well ſeparately. For the principal part of the Wicked conſiſts in the loſs of the Happineſs of the Juſt; and the deliverance from the miſerable ſtate of the Wicked, cauſeth a conſiderable part of the Felicity of the happy Souls.

Not only the knowledge of each of theſe two Ends is inſeparable from that of the other; but they are both ſo ſtrictly tied by the Nature of Man, that we cannot know them well without knowing Man, nor know Man well without the knowledge of them.

Truly if we examin the Source of all the vain fancies of Philoſophers touching Sovereign Happineſs and Miſery, we ſhall find theſe fancies have had no other riſe than the ignoranc they were in concerning the Nature of Man. For it being imagin'd that the Soul was not capable of other Actions than thoſe they obſerved in her in this Life; as thoſe Actions are all weak and languiſhing, they were of opinion that ſhe could not be fully ſatisfied with a fading Happineſs, ſuch a one as that which we have in this World; and that ſhe hath no other evils to fear but thoſe ſhe may feel here.

But had they well apprehended, that this Soul which is at preſent in this languiſhing ſtate of darkneſs and obſcurity, muſt be by Death placed in another ſtate, where her Knowledge will be infinitely larger and clearer, and her Deſires more impetuous and violent; they would have changed all their Idea's, and by following this Light they would have come very near the knowledge of Heaven and Hell.

For by this 'tis clear, that the Soul coming to be ſeparated from the Body, and placed in a ſtate of Liberty, will begin to tend towards the Objects of her Love with

with quite another vehemency than that wherewith ſhe is carried at preſent; and thus caſting her ſelf towards theſe Objects with this violence, either ſhe will enjoy them, and conſequently ſhe will have a Joy ſo much greater, as her Love ſhall be violent; or ſhe will not enjoy them, and then ſhe will be melancholy proportioned to the vehemency of her Love; ſeeing that Sadneſs is only the ſentiment of being deprived of the Object we love.

This concludes already, That the Soul muſt neceſſarily be at the Hour of her death in a ſtate of extreme Joy or Sadneſs; and that by her Nature ſhe is uncapable of indifferent Sentiments.

But we ſhall urge theſe Conſequences further, if we add thereto two Principles which Reaſon and Faith render evident. The firſt is, That 'tis impoſſible God's Juſtice can grant to the Soul in the other life, which is fixt and immovable, the enjoyment of her Deſires, which ſhall be diſorderly and criminal. The ſecond is, That not being made to enjoy the Creatures, all deſire ſhe ſhall have to enjoy them is wicked and diſorderly.

From whence it follows, That all the Souls who go out of this World, and ſhall have no love but for Creatures, ſhall be deprived thereof for ever; becauſe God cannot permit that this deſire, being bad, may be ſatisfied with the enjoyment of their Objects, and conſequently they ſhall fall into a terrible Sadneſs: And that, on the contrary, all thoſe who ſhall love God, who is the only legitimate Object of their love, ſhall be united to him, and enjoy him, becauſe, if they ſhould not enjoy him, they would be miſerable; and as it is unjuſt that they be joyful in loving what they ought not to love, it would be unjuſt that they ſhould be ſad in loving what they ought to love.

See here in what manner the knowledge of Man's nature conducts us to conceive Hell and Heaven. And it may be ſaid alſo, That the knowledge of Heaven and Hell makes us know what Man's nature is; for the neceſſity there is of partaking of the one, or the other of theſe

these two Ends, is an evident proof of its Greatness; for it shews that God designs it nothing of mediocrity; it must be either very happy or very miserable, there is no *medium* for it: It is born to be heaped with all sorts of Good, without any mixture of Evil; or overwhelmed with all sorts of Evil, without the least tincture of Good: and thus it is not made for the World, because all there is a mixture of Good and Evil, and the Good or Evil which may be had there, is not very great.

This Life through which we ought to pass, is not given it but to make choice of the one or the other of these two states; and this choice is the only employment and the only exercise of this present Life: For 'tis not done by one single Action; they contribute all thereunto, and serve all to advance it towards the one or the other.

There is only this difference, upon this Point, betwixt Hell and Heaven; That to fall into Hell, it sufficeth to take the way that leads thereunto, without any need of desiring it; but to arrive at Felicity and Happiness, we must have a sincere desire for it. So, as we cannot desire it without knowing it, our first care ought to be to labour to acquire this Knowledge: And it is what this Book is intended for.

CHAP. II.

That 'tis a strange thing that true beatitude is so little desired by Men. Heresie of the mind, Heresie of the heart upon this Subject.

ALthough there is nothing so different as Heaven and Hell, and methinks that if the horror which causeth the consideration of the first of these Objects, hinders Men from thinking thereof, the fulness of all the good which is discovered in the other should withhold and stop their thoughts there; it is nevertheless true, that

that Men ſcarcely think more of Heaven than Hell, that they are as little concerned for it, and that they live near in an equal oblivion of the one and the other.

This ought to appear preſently more ſtrange than the firſt, (*Aug. De Trinit. l. 13. c. 4.*) The moſt ſtirring, and the moſt eſſential deſire Man hath is that of being happy. This deſire is imprinted in the bottom of Nature, and diſperſeth it ſelf into all its actions. Man aims only at this end, he acts nothing but for that purpoſe, nothing can pleaſe him but through this conſideration. *Man hath never been without this deſire, there hath been none, there could have been none*, ſaith St. *Auſtin* in *Pſal.* 128. *m.* 1. and in *Pſal.* 32. *without it.* It is not neceſſary to excite it in them. Finally, though this inclination be the ſource of all the diviſions of Mankind, by the bad uſe they make thereof, there is nothing in which they can be more uniform than in this inclination.

Saint *Auſtin* adds in another place, That this deſire of Beatitude is ſo ingraven in the heart of all Mankind, that although ſin and miſery be inſeparable, they are not inclined nevertheleſs to ſin, but that they may avoid being miſerable. *Cum ſit malitiæ individua comes miſeria, iſti perverti non ſolum mali eſſe volunt, & miſeri nolunt, quod fieri non poteſt; ſed ideo mali eſſe volunt ne miſeri ſiant.*

Nevertheleſs it is true, that this erring is more eaſie to be comprehended in thoſe, who being ignorant of the lights of faith, apply this general deſire of being happy through error, to ſome objects which render them effectively miſerable.

But what is more ſurpriſing, is, that thoſe on whom God has beſtowed the incomparable favour of declaring to them this great and happy news of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the inconceivable happineſs he has promiſed to thoſe who ſhall be partakers thereof, which he had kept hid the ſpace of four thouſand years from all the World, are nevertheleſs ſo little touched therewith, that this great Object is that whereon they think the leaſt, and which makes the leaſt impreſſions upon them.

For

For does it not seem, that this violent inclination which they have of being happy, should unite all their passions and all their desires towards this ineffable happiness God discovers to them? They seek it with disquiet and trouble; they have experienced, a thousand ways, that they can find on Earth nothing but false happiness: we shew them a true and solid one; they grant they believe it. From whence comes it then that they do not make it the most agreeable and the most continual occupation of their minds? 'Tis doubtless whereunto reason inclines them; but they have in them a principle stronger than reason, which hinders them, which is the corruption of the heart.

For it is to be observed that there are, upon this Subjects two kinds of Heresies; the one may be called the Heresies of the mind, because the mind approves them, consents thereunto, and maintains them with all its light: The other may be called the Heresies of the heart, because they spring from the passions which force the mind to frame Ideas and judgments which are conform thereto, although there be at the same time in this mind contrary lights which believe these false judgments.

The divers judgments of Philosophers touching beatitude, are of the nature of those which we have named Heresies of the mind. This matter hath appeared to them very fit to exercise their subtilty and eloquence. They have divided themselves upon this point into divers Sects. Some have placed happiness, I mean beatitude, in the body, some in the mind; others in both. *Varron* joyning some circumstances thereunto, makes the number of their opinions amount to 288, and St. *Austin* reduceth them to twelve, by cutting off the unnecessary differences.

Christian Religion hath had no trouble to destroy these Imaginations of Philosophers, whereof the most part served rather as Subjects to their Discourses and Disputes, than as an End to their Desires, or rule to their Actions.

But it hath not rooted out with the same facility the Heresies

Hereſies of the ſecond kind, which we have named the Hereſies of the heart. Chriſtian Religion hath found one of this nature upon the Subject of the Beatitude, diffuſed into all Men, which makes them eſtabliſh the Sovereign Good in this Life, in the Enjoyment of ſenſual Pleaſures, of curious Objects, of Honours, of the Glory and Power of the World, and of all that leads thereunto.

This Hereſie is nothing but the triple Concupiſcence to which St. *John* doth reduce all Mens Paſſions and Actions, when he ſays, *cap.* 1. *ver.* 16. *All that is in the world is concupiſcence of the fleſh, concupiſcence of the eyes, and pride of life.*

So this is the general Hereſie of Mankind, which firſt corrupts the Hearts of Men, and after that their Minds.

We need only ſeek in this univerſal Hereſie the cauſe of this coldneſs and this inſenſibility, which is obſerved in moſt Men in reſpect of true Beatitude. Chriſtian Religion finds it eſtabliſhed and domineering in their Hearts; and although it baniſh it by its Light of the Mind from ſome, and that it cure likewiſe their Heart from what is mortal and criminal; yet it deſtroys it not entirely: ſo that there remains always ſome root at the bottom of the Soul, until Death, which always produceth therein ſome guſt for the Goods of the Earth, and ſome diſguſt for thoſe of Heaven.

Thoſe Goods which Religion propoſeth to us, are not preſent Goods; and Concupiſcence deſires preſent Goods. It muſt expect them; and Concupiſcence being haſty and violent, will not expect: We do not ſee them by the Senſes; and Concupiſcence is concerned at nothing but what toucheth the Senſes: We cannot have Honour in the World; and 'tis this Honour of the World Concupiſcence covets: Laſtly, To arrive thereunto, we muſt be ſeparated from thoſe ſenſual Objects, and renounce Honours; which is what Concupiſcence cannot ſuffer.

Concupiſcence oppoſes the ſeeking and the Meditation of the Goods of the other Life, as it were the annihilating its own. It ſpreads diſguſt upon all the Actions

by

by which the Soul would incline thereto. It draws it low, when it should raise it self aloft, and by an horrible subversion represents this Source of all the true Good, and true Joy, under black, sad, and melancholy Ideas.

Those whose Hearts it possesseth, understand not likewise what is said thereof; the Fever of Iniquity has made them lose this Taste. *What will you have me to do to you*, saith St. *Austin* to them, *in* Psal. 30. *seeing that you cannot taste the true Goods, I am not able to make you comprehend them. Give me a heart which may love them, and understand what I say. Give me a heart to desire them, which may hunger after them; who sees it self in the Desart of this World, as out of its Country; who sighs with an ardent desire after this Fountain of our eternal Country. Give me, say I, a Man in this disposition, and he understands what I say; but if I speak to a cold and insensible heart, it cannot tell what I say. Si frigido loquor, nescit quod loquor.*

'Tis Concupiscence which spreads this cold and distaste over the Heart; and as it is more strong and lively in some than in others, it disperses it unequally, and in different degrees. It makes some entirely bent against Discourses and Thoughts of the other life. It makes others tire themselves presently with it. It hinders others from applying themselves thereunto, furnishing them with other Objects.

Behold its Propensity and Inclination, and we need but sound a little our own Hearts, to acknowledge them in some degree in our selves; but it is good at first to consult the lights of Reason, to learn in what manner we ought to consider this Malady, which with Reason we have called the natural and universal Heresie of depraved Man, even then principally when it is so strong, that it stifles entirely in us the desire of heavenly Goods.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That 'tis a criminal Condition not to desire the Beatitude of the other life.

WE consider very ordinarily the Beatitude which Faith promiseth to the Just, as a Good which should be the principal Object of all Men's desires; and we condemn, as an unanswerable Stupidity, the pronity they have to worldly things, which hinders them from thinking thereof. But we scarcely regard this desire of a happy life, as a disposition both essential and necessary to arrive thereat; nor the being deprived of this desire, by an inclination to this present life, as a state of Sin which renders us Criminals. Few Persons examine themselves upon this Point, and we hardly see any who reviewing their former lives, consider it as a great disorder to have spent part thereof without desiring the other, and hating this.

Nevertheless, as there are some Actions which of themselves are mortal, and exclude those who commit them out of the Kingdom of Heaven; there are also States and Dispositions, which of themselves are incompatible with this Kingdom.

Now betwixt these Dispositions, the Fathers have placed this, of finding themselves well in this World, of contenting themselves with the Goods they enjoy therein, and of not desiring the happy life which *Jesus Christ* promiseth them in the other life.

'Tis St. *Austin* who did it expressly; *'Tis*, saith he, *after the heavenly* Jerusalem *we sigh, in considering our selves as it were Strangers and Captives under the foot and bondage of a mortal Body: 'Tis after this same Object we shall sigh in our Pilgrimage, by forbearing to rejoyce in our native Country. But he who laments not as a Stranger on Earth, shall not rejoyce as a Citizen in* Jerusalem, *because the desire of a happy life is not in him. Qui non gemit ut peregrinus, non gaudebit civis, quia desiderium non est in illo.* St. *Aug.* in *Psal.* 148.

This

This holy Doctor ſaith the ſame thing in another place, in a more ſhort manner, in explicating theſe words of the Apoſtle, *Infœlix ego homo. Let that man*, ſaith he, *in* Pſal. 145. *hope for felicity who acknowledgeth himſelf miſerable in this World: Illè ſperet fœlicitatem qui confitetur infœlicitatem.* That is to ſay, That he who doth not acknowledge himſelf miſerable, ought not to hope for felicity. And therefore he decides neatly elſewhere, That whoſoever is happy in this World, or rather whoſoever believes himſelf happy, and lets himſelf be tranſported *by the ſenſual Pleaſures he enjoys, by the temporal Goods he poſſeſſeth, and by the felicity wherewith he is environed, hath the voice of Ravens and not of Doves; becauſe Ravens make a great noiſe with their cries, whereas the Doves do nothing but ſigh and lament: Habet vocem Corvi, vox Corvi clamoſa eſt, non gemebunda.* St. *Aug.* in *Joan. Tr.* 6.

'Tis by the ſame Principle he hath always conſidered the Love of this preſent life, by which we would almoſt always remain as it were oppoſite to the Love of God. *That Man*, ſaith he, *in* Pſal. 85. *to whom his Pilgrimage is ſweet, loves not his Country.* And if our Country be ſweet to us, it muſt neceſſarily be that our Pilgrimage is hard and troubleſome.

But is the Love of God compatible with this deprivation from the deſire of the other life? *No*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in the place before cited: And it is by this means he would have us try whether we belong to God, or no. *Do not conſult the Fleſh*, ſaith he, *conſult the Spirit; interrogate thy Heart, and hearken what it anſwers. Give ear to Faith, Hope, Charity, which have begun to be in thee. If thou hadſt received aſſurance of being always filled with temporal Goods, and that God ſhould ſay, Behold thy ſhare, but thou ſhalt not ſee my Face; wouldſt thou rejoyce at thoſe Goods? Is there any one would be glad of this ſhare, and would ſay in his Heart, Behold me in an abundance of temporal Goods, I eſteem my ſelf happy, I deſire nothing at all more? That Man who ſhould ſay ſo, hath not yet begun to love God, nor to ſigh and lament as a Stranger on the Earth. Nondum cœpit eſſe amator Dei, nondum cœpit ſuſpirare tanquam peregrinus.*

If

If he who loves not God, is yet under the *Anathema* pronounced by St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. 16. 11. *Qui non amat Dominum Jeſum Chriſtum, ſit Anathema*: If he be not ſeparated from the Children of the Devil, nor received into the number of thoſe of God, ſeeing that according to St. *Auſtin*, in Epiſt. Joan. Tr. 15. *There is only the love of God which diſtinguiſheth betwixt the Children of God, and the Children of the Devil: Sola dilectis diſcernit inter filios Dei & inter filios Diaboli:* If he hath not received the Spirit of Adoption, which makes us Heirs; *Si filii & hæredes*, Rom. 8. 17. And laſtly, If he is in death, as St. *John* ſaith, 1 Joan. 3. 14. *Qui non diligit manet in morte:* Who can doubt that this deprivation from the deſire of heavenly Beatitude, including that of the Love of God, is not a criminal Diſpoſition?

Not to ſigh as a Stranger, nor to love God, are two inſeparable things, according to St. *Auſtin: Nondum cœpit eſſe amator Dei, nondum cœpit ſuſpirare tanquam peregrinus.*

He who loves not God, does not ſigh after life everlaſting; he who ſighs not after life everlaſting, does not love God. Now he who loves not God, belongs not to the New Law, nor can he have a part in the Recompences thereof.

The firſt effect of God's Spirit in us being to make us pray, his firſt effect is to make us lament and ſigh: For the Prayers of the Holy Ghoſt are ſighs and lamentations. He prays for us, ſaith St. *Paul*, by ſighs which cannot be related: *Poſtulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus.* Now to ſigh, we muſt find our ſelves ill where we are, and deſire another ſtate; ſo he who does not ſigh and lament, prays not; and he who prays not, obtains nothing from God.

Prayer is therefore a Proof that the ſtate we ſpeak of, is a ſtate of Sin; and whoever finds himſelf in this condition, when he is a dying, cannot expect the Kingdom of Heaven: For Prayer is a neceſſary means to obtain this Kingdom, in reſpect of thoſe who have the uſe of Reaſon. 'Tis likewiſe a Duty to beg it, ſeeing it is one of the Demands of the *Pater Noſter*. Now whoever does not deſire it, does not ask it; for Prayer

conſiſts not in Speech, it conſiſts in the Deſire, and it is likewiſe nothing elſe but a holy Deſire, according to St. *Auſtin*. He that deſires always, prays always; and he who deſires not, never prays.

Thus thoſe who have no deſire of the life of Heaven, which is the Kingdom of God, not demanding this Kingdom, it is not ſtrange they do not obtain it, being they do not vouchſafe to ask it.

Chriſtian hope being alſo abſolutely neceſſary for Salvation, furniſheth yet another Proof of this Truth. For hope includes the deſire of what we hope for; ſeeing that as deſire is only a love which enclines towards an abſent Object, ſo likewiſe hope is only a deſire of this abſent Object; which is looked upon as a thing which may be acquired. If to deſtroy hope, be to take away the thought of obtaining what we deſire, 'tis yet to deſtroy it more, to take away the love and the deſire. It is then clear that he who is content with this preſent life, and who does not deſire the Felicity of the other, hath not Chriſtian hope, and that thus he is not leſs out of a ſtate of arriving at Salvation, than if he had no Faith.

In fine, This Doctrin is nothing elſe than what all Divines teach after St. *Auſtin*; that 'tis a mortal Sin to eſtabliſh his laſt End in any Creature whatſoever: For it is very viſible, that he who does not deſire a happy life, which conſiſts in the poſſeſſion of God, doth not eſtabliſh his End therein; ſeeing it is by love, and by deſire that we eſtabliſh it there, and not by an action of the Underſtanding. It is neceſſary then that we eſtabliſh it in the enjoyment of ſome Creatures; we muſt love them as our laſt End, and as the Object of all our deſires. Now there is no queſtion but this Diſpoſition is Criminal, and that it renders even the Affections Criminal, which otherwiſe were not ſo. Therefore St. *Thomas* examining how theſe venial Sins can become mortal, decides expreſly, That the venial Affections or Inclinations for Creatures become mortal, as ſoon as we eſtabliſh our End and our ſovereign Happineſs therein; and it is clear that we eſtabliſh it therein, when we

we deſire nothing more; it being impoſſible that Man can be without ſome principal End, whereto he relates his actions and himſelf.

CHAP. IV.

That moſt part of Chriſtians are in this diſpoſition.

ALL the Principles whereof this Doctrin is a neceſſary conſequence, being acknowledged by all the World, there will be found doubtleſs very few who will diſpute it: But I cannot tell whether there will be many who can perceive how many there are, to whom it gives leave to miſtruſt their ſtate and condition; and fear or judge even with reaſon, that they are in this Diſpoſition incompatible with Salvation, as we have juſt now repreſented.

I ſpeak not of thoſe who are engaged in manifeſt Crimes; for thoſe, in leaning to the actions to which God hath faſtned the excluſion of this Kingdom, do clearly make appear, that they prefer the Pleaſures they take therein, before the poſſeſſion of this ſame Kingdom which they baniſh; and even their Crimes conſiſt in this, preferring Creatures before the poſſeſſing of God. I ſpeak of thoſe who, in appearance, lead a more orderly life, and to whom no actions viſibly Criminal can be imputed; and I ſay there are many, who have great reaſon to believe, that they have not in their Hearts this deſire of a happy life, without which they cannot arrive at Heaven.

For Example, Can we believe that thoſe who hardly ſo much as ever think thereof, that harken only with diſtaſte to what Men ſay of it, that have their Minds buſied with nothing but the thoughts of Fortune, and being fixed in this World, can have a hearty deſire for the other life, a diſlike for this?

Can it be imagined, that thoſe whoſe lives are only a Chain and a Circle of Divertiſement, and whoſe great

buſineſs is to make their Pleaſures ſucceed one another, without any interruption, ſave that which is neceſſary to refreſh and recreate them, can paſs their lives in this lamenting and ſighing Condition, without which, according to St. *Auſtin*, there is no pretending to the Joy of the Citizens of *Jeruſalem?*

It is true, That trouble and diſguſt do not forbear to find them in the midſt of their Pleaſures; but this diſguſt comes from the deſire of the Goods of another nature. 'Tis a diſguſt which ſprings from the greatneſs of their Cupidity, and not from their Weakneſs. It happens, becauſe they are not yet content with the Pleaſures they enjoy, and becauſe they would have ſtill greater. 'Tis a diſguſt which comes from the ardency with which they covet earthly Goods, and not from the deſire nor the Idea of heavenly Goods, on which they do never think at all.

This ſighing whereof we ſpeak, is not a diſlike of certain Pleaſures; 'tis a diſlike of all Pleaſures. It does not include a diſdain for certain Honours, and certain Grandeurs of this World, but a diſdain for all worldly Honours and Grandeurs. 'Tis a diſlike which makes us believe our ſelves miſerable, being ſeparated from God, being out of our Country, being ſubject to ſin, being every moment in danger of loſing the happineſs whereunto we aſpire. What is it that afflicts the Heart, ſaith St. *Auſtin?* 'Tis for that it is not with Jeſus Chriſt, for that it is out of its Country.

'Tis this made that holy Doctor ſay, *That this preſent life is a continual affliction for vertuous Men. If you behold your ſelf therein*, ſaith he, *as a ſtranger, either you ſcarcely love your Country, or you muſt be afflicted there. For who would not be troubled that he is not with him he deſires? From whence comes it that you do not reſent this affliction? 'Tis for want of love; love the other life, and you will ſoon find bitterneſs in this, with what proſperity ſoever it may flatter you, or what delights ſoever it may be repleniſhed with. Ama alteram vitam, & videbis, quia iſta vita tribulatio eſt, quacunque proſperitate fulgeat, quibuſcunque deliciis abundet atque circumfloreat.* Aug. *in* Pſal. 131.

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It is very true, That this affliction and this ſighing does not exclude all ſort of affection for worldly things; but it includes nevertheleſs ſuch a preference of eternal life before temporal, how happy ſoever we may think it, that we account as the greateſt of miſeries, the enjoyment of all earthly things, and the being eternally deprived of the ſight of God.

But perchance we ſhall find this ſighing, and this deſire more eaſily in poor folk than in rich; amongſt the miſeries and the labours of this life, than amongſt pleaſures and divertiſements: We ſhould have, doubtleſs, cauſe to believe it, if it were ſufficient to find ſighs and tears; for we find them in great abundance in the World, as we do miſeries: But for all that, it is not enough to ſigh and weep. We muſt ſigh and weep, not becauſe we are deprived of earthly Pleaſures, but for being deprived of heavenly Pleaſures. Covetouſneſs hath its tears, as well as Charity: *And there are many*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in *Pſal.* 136. *who ſhed* Babylonian *tears*, *becauſe they know only* Babylonian *joys*. *Multi flent fletu* Babylonio, *quia gaudent gaudiis* Babyloniis.

Many may be found, ſaith the ſame Saint, in Tr. 6. in Joan. in Pſ. 48. *who ſigh under the weight of the afflictions of the Earth, or becauſe they have loſt their Goods, or are forced to Priſon and Chains, or caſt down with Sickneſs, or forced to ſubmit to the Artifices of their Enemies: But they do not ſigh like Doves, becauſe it is not the love of God, nor the Holy Ghoſt which makes them to ſigh. Therefore you ſee that when theſe perſons are delivered from theſe afflictions, they caſt forth great cries, and make appear by their tranſports they were Ravens and not Doves.*

God does not diſtinguiſh the poor and the rich by the outward Goods; he diſtinguiſheth them by their deſires. 'Tis by their Heart, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, he examins them, not by their Cheſts and Houſes, in *Pſal.* 51. *Divites & pauperes in corde interrogat Deus, non in Arca & Domo. What doth it avail you*, ſaith he again, *for that you are void of earthly Goods, if you burn with a deſire to have them? Quid tibi prodeſt quod eges facultate, ſi ardes cupiditate?* He makes the ſame diſtinction of ſighs and

tears, and he placeth in the rank of thoſe who have their conſolation upon Earth, thoſe who weep and ſigh that they have it not; thoſe who thirſt not after Juſtice, but after worldly Goods, and who hate this life only, becauſe it is not permitted them to enjoy it as they would.

And 'tis this which gives leave to conclude, That this ſighing is not leſs rare amongſt the poor and miſerable, than amongſt the rich and happy; becauſe if we ſee more miſeries there, we ſee not leſs concupiſcence; they think no more of the other life, and they are not leſs filled with the deſire of the Goods of this.

If we will know whether there be many who deſire ſincerely life everlaſting, 'tis but examining whether there be many we can ſay who lay up their treaſure in Heaven; ſeeing that, according to the Evangeliſt, Man's Heart is where his Treaſure is. Note, It is certain, according to the ſame Evangeliſt, that we have not our Treaſure in Heaven, but when we treaſure it in Heaven, and not upon the Earth; that is, when we heap up good works, which we ſend before us to nouriſh us in eternity, when we tranſport what we can of our Goods thither, as thoſe do who would eſtabliſh themſelves in another Country by leaving their own. 'Tis for this reaſon we may acknowledge what is the place we look upon as our Country; or rather, 'tis this makes us ſee there are few who look upon Heaven as their Country, ſeeing there are very few who tranſport their Goods thither, or make there a Treaſure of good works; but that, on the contrary, we ſee that all the cares and all the actions of the commonality of the World tend only to the Earth, and are only for the Earth.

To deſire life everlaſting, is to deſire Juſtice, is to be in a thirſt after it; for life everlaſting will conſiſt in the poſſeſſion of perfect Juſtice. Now I know not whether, conſidering the life of the commonalty of the World, and ſeeing how little we are concerned at our faults, how little care we have of avoiding them, how little we dream of advancing our ſelves in piety, it may

may very well be believed, there are many who be in this thirſt and deſire of Juſtice.

All this ſhews that we have no greater intereſt than to make this deſire of the felicity of Heaven ſpring up in us, and this ſighing for our exile, if we have them not, and to nouriſh them if we have them. But as theſe ſentiments have two conſiderations; one towards this preſent life, which is a conſideration of diſdain and averſion; the other towards the life of Heaven, which is a conſideration of love and deſire; it is clear that to excite them, it is neceſſary to know the miſeries of this preſent life, and the incomprehenſible Goods of the other very well, which is what we ſhall endeavour to repreſent in the ſequel of this Book.

CHAP. V.

Of the exterior miſeries of this life.

THE heighth of miſery, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, is to be miſerable, and not to be concerned for it. *Quid miſerius miſero non miſerante ſeipſum?* Nevertheleſs this heighth of miſery makes the common ſtate of Men, and nothing almoſt happens more generally to them, than to be abſolutely caſt down with, and inſenſible of thoſe Evils which overwhelm them.

This inſenſibility happens not in them from the diſdain they have for the miſeries of this life; but by their blindneſs, and the being carried away by their paſſions. For ſee here in what manner they procure to themſelves the reſt and joy they ſeem ſometimes to poſſeſs. Firſt, in reſpect of paſt Evils, they think no more of them: They eſteem as nothing all future Evils, and without all thoſe ſolid Reaſons, Philoſophers have endeavoured to furniſh them with, they deliver themſelves from the fear they may have of them, either through raſh hopes, or ſimply by not thinking at all on them.

They know not the greateſt part of their ſpiritual Evils, and they make very few reflexions upon thoſe they do know. Their ſelf-love diſſipates from their ſight moſt of thoſe Objects, which ſhouldmake any Impreſſion upon their Minds; and by this means they become capable of applying themſelves to ſome of the Objects of their Paſſions, which they ſee but by halves, and whoſe diſmal conſequences they do not at all conſider; and this is what Men call Pleaſures, and the Joys of this World.

With all theſe miſerable Conſolations, which their Blindneſs or their Paſſions procure them, they ceaſe not to be often dejected by Sadneſs and Melancholy; becauſe there are infinite of Evils in this life, which they cannot avoid ſeeing and feeling; but there is this difference betwixt their Goods and Evils, that their Goods appear ſuch only by a miſtake of their Imagination, and their Evils have commonly more reality than they are aware of.

If this Ignorance wherein they are, of the moſt part of their miſeries, had no bad effects, perhaps we ſhould be tempted to look upon it as a kind of Good; but there lacks a great deal of that coming to paſs. This falſe Idea they have of the Goods and Evils of this life, entertains their Affections, nouriſheth their paſſions, and hinders them from thinking of themſelves. And thus nothing is of more importance than to be undeceived, and not to palliate the real and effective miſeries of human life.

It would be an endleſs Diſcourſe to pretend to repreſent here all theſe miſeries; we muſt be content to trace out a ſmall pourtraicture of them: We ſhall chiefly borrow it of St. *Auſtin*, who having been much taken up with this Object, has made divers Pictures thereof in his Works.

He begins it ordinarily with the ſtate of Children; Behold, ſaith he, Children, and conſider with how many Evils they are overwhelmed. Amongſt how many Vanities, Errors, and Frights they are educated, Aug. Cont. Julian. l. 4. c. ult. *Intuere parvulos quot & quanta mala*

mala patiantur, in quibus vanitatibus, erroribus, terroribus creſcant. Although we may be accuſtomed to obſerve their ſtate without horror, as imagining they will come out thereof, however it is ſuch that there is no Man who is diſcreet and wiſe, who had not rather die than be reduced to this weakneſs, ignorance, and imbecillity of Mind and Body, as is ſeen in Children, *Aug. de Civit. Dei. l.* 21. *c.* 24. Thus we begin our whole life in a ſtate which we judge worſe than death, and this ſo wretched ſtate compleats a great part of this life.

'Tis true, That Reaſon unfolding it ſelf by little and little, we forget ſome of our childiſh Weakneſſes by means of inſtruction. But that, ſaith St. *Auſtin, De Civit. Dei. l.* 28. *c.* 12. is not done without a great deal of care and pains. How neceſſary are threats and chaſtiſements to keep Children within their limits, and to fit them for ſomething that's uſeful? And how ſeldom it proſpers, in regard of the greateſt number, notwithſtanding all theſe chaſtiſements? The torrent of natural Corruption carries away the moſt part of them, and the obſcurity and dulneſs of Mind hinders others from comprehending what we would gladly ſhew them. 'Tis a miſery to remain in Ignorance and Brutality, which we bring with us from our birth; and 'tis another miſery to free our ſelves from them by ſuch painful and laborious means.

The only advantage Children have, is, that they are Miſerable without knowing it, or without diſcerning their Evils, if that may be called advantage; but this is taken away by the encreaſe of Age, which giving them a more diſtinct ſentiment of their inclinations, renders them alſo more miſerable; as being always deprived of ſome part of what they deſire.

We would not die, nor have any pain of Body or Mind; we deſire not to be deceived; *Non mori, non offendi, non falli*; yet we are every hour expoſed to death, to griefs, and to errors.

Who can, *ſaith St. Auſtin*, I doe not ſay expreſs, but comprehend all the Miſeries whereunto Men are ſubject, and which are conſequences of their Miſerable condi-

conditions? What apprehension and what grief does the death of Neighbours, the loss of Goods, condemnations, treacheries, false suspicions, violences, which we suffer, as Robbing, Captivity, Fetters, Imprisonment, Banishment, Tortures, loss of Limbs, Infamies and Brutalities, and a thousand other horrible things, cause in us, which very often happen? Who can rely upon his innocence to be free from the insults of the Devils, seeing that sometimes they torment Children so cruelly who are newly Baptised; God, who permits it, teaching us thereby to deplore the misery of this life, and to desire the felicity of the other? What shall I say of the Sicknesses which are in such great numbers, that even Physical Books cannot contain them all? And the most part of remedies which are administred to heal and cure them, are so many torments, so that a Man cannot be cured of one grief but by another.

The ordinary state and condition of Mankind is nothing but a continual Sickness, which hath need of remedies; and these remedies are other kind of Diseases, which afterwards we must endeavour to cure. Hunger and Thirst would kill us, if we did not put a stop thereto by nourishments and drinks. We become weary if we stand long, and we are refreshed by sitting down; but this remedy begins presently to be troublesom to us, and we cannot sit any long time. We are weary with Watching, Standing, Walking, Sitting, Eating, and which way soever we turn our selves to take some rest, we find there weariness and trouble. *Quidquid nobis providerimus ad refectionem, illic rursus invenimus defectionem.*

'Tis true, that all these Evils may serve as exercise to Virtue, but if Virtue can make good use of them, and can suffer them, nevertheless it cannot love the Evils it suffers, nor ought not to love them. For that is not the natural state of Man; 'tis a consequence of sin, and as we must desire the destruction of it, we must also wish and desire that of its consequences. 'Tis a state of War, which permits us to enjoy no Peace: Yet it is just to incline to the first order, and to this peace which sin hath disquieted. The state of War can be neither

neither Natural nor Eternal, for every thing tends to Peace. In a word, it is lawful and conform to the order of God, and his Eternal Law to desire to enjoy it without any trouble or disturbance of Body or Mind, seeing 'tis what he has designed Man for, and that he must be Miserable out of this order, in which and for which he hath created him.

CHAP. VI.

The Image of Man's inward Miseries in this Life.

BUT all outward Evils, whereof Man is continually a mark in this World, compose only a small part of the Miseries of this life. Those which afflict his Mind, ought to have infinitely more power to make him hate it. Although there should be only this horrible uncertainty of the grace or the hatred of God, doubtfulness of our Salvation or of utter loss, wherein we must absolutely pass this life; should it not be sufficient to fill it with bitterness? What Criminal was ever pleased in a Prison, wherein he was confin'd, and there to expect a Sentence which ought to decide either his death or his life?

Now if we open our Eyes to see these continual dangers wherein we are of being lost Eternally, the precipices which environ us, the snares which our ways are full of, the malice, force, and the tricks of our Enemies, our weakness and want of light; must we not be stupified not only to believe our selves happy in this state, but also not to esteem our selves most miserable?

It is true, that the grace and light of God might be our defence against all these dangers, and a support to our weakness against such terrible Enemies: *But alas! what do we do to deserve it? What are our Prayers which ought to gain it? What weight or charge does not the Soul experience, when she would raise her self up to God? How much does this mortal and depraved body cause her of trouble and obstacles, which call her to the Earth and withdraw her from*

from God? What innumerable crouds of Phantomes and Tentations come to moleſt and diſturb her? and does ſhe not feel in her ſelf as it were a multitude of Worms gnawing her, which ſpring from the bottom of her corruptions? Aug. in Pſal. 102.

What Miſery to be Maſter neither of Mind nor Body, and to ſee the one buſied with a thouſand ridiculous and diſorderly thoughts, and the other agitated with an infinite of evil deſires and corrupted ſentiments, and not able to ſtop this miſerable crowd! to be obliged to live with this throng of interior Enemies, always at variance with them, and never able to exterminate them!

To caſt our ſelves away, there needs nothing but that we deliver up our ſelves to them, and that we give over oppoſing them; and we cannot warrant our ſelves, but by continual reſiſting. *It behoves us, ſaith St.* Auſtin, de Civit. Dei. lib. 22. cap. 23. *to watch continually, for fear leſt a falſe appearance deceive us, leſt an artificial Diſcourſe ſurprize us, leſt ſome Error make it ſelf Maſter of our Minds, leſt we take Good for Bad, or Bad for Good, leſt Fear diſſwade us from doing our Duties, leſt Paſſion precipitate us to do what we ſhould not do, leſt the Sun go down upon our Wrath, leſt Hatred ſway us to render Evil for Good, leſt exceſſive Sadneſs deject us, leſt we be unthankful for a good turn done, leſt evil Sayings trouble us, leſt we commit raſh Judgments, leſt thoſe which are made of us do moleſt us, leſt Sin reign in our mortal Bodies, by inclining us to ſecond its deſires, leſt we make our Members ſerve as Inſtruments of Iniquity to Sin, leſt the Eyes follow their diſorderly Appetites, leſt a deſire of Revenge overſway and provoke us, leſt we fix our Looks and Thoughts upon unlawful Objects, leſt we take delight in hearing ſome injurious or diſhoneſt talk, leſt in this War, ſo painful and ſo full of dangers, we do promiſe our ſelves the victory by our proper forces, or attribute it to our ſelves, in lieu of attributing it to the favour of him of whom the* Apoſtle ſaith, *Thanks be given to God who gives us victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Who can deny that 'tis not a great Miſery to be thus divided and torn in our ſelves, and obliged to this continual combate. *The Spirit carries us aloft,* ſays the ſame St.

St. Auſtin, *the weight of the fleſh forceth us downwards. So in theſe two different ſtrifes, whereof one elevates us, and the other humbles us, there is a continual War in us, and this War is properly the Affliction and Miſery of this life. Spiritum rurſum vocat, pondus carnis deorſum revocat. Inter duos conatus ſuſpenſionis & ponderis colluctatio quædam eſt, & ipſa colluctatio preſſura noſtra eſt.*

Behold the condition of this life, but how troubleſome is it? How many viſible and inviſible wounds receive we thereby? How much reaſon have we to fear the event of it, ſeeing there needs but one ſingle ſight, and one ſingle conſent to deſtroy us?

Likewiſe we cannot regard with certainty the favours which we have received of God, and the good works which they have done us. We ſpoil them, we ſully them, and we loſe them often, in fixing them, and we loſe them often, in fixing our Eyes ſtedfaſtly thereon, as well as in expoſing them to others. And how troubleſom ſoever the Spectacle of theſe our Evils and Defects may be for us, it is yet leſs to be feared than that of our good and our virtue.

What if in diverting our Minds a little with our inward Miſeries, we pretend to comfort our ſelves by the commerce of Creatures, and by a proſpect of what paſſeth in the World? we ſhall not find therein any thing but occaſions of hating this life. For what do we diſcover therein but intereſt, injuſtice, violent paſſions, oppreſſions of truth and juſtice, blindneſs, errors, preventions, wiles, diſguiſements, and vanity? Wherein is reaſon harkned unto? Where are Men guided by true intereſt?

Not only, as the Prophet ſaith, There is no truth, mercy, nor knowledge of God upon Earth, *that is to ſay*, in the World: But the ſmall number of People who have the Mercy, Truth, and Juſtice of God in their heart, know not how to practiſe it in reſpect of People of the VVorld. VVe know not how we ought to receive them, nor what we ought to ſay to them. VVe muſt fear angring and hurting them, inſtead of aſſiſting them, we muſt likewiſe fear wanting the Charity which is due

to

to them. This double fear keepeth the Mind in a continual agitation and uncertainty, and what precaution ſoever we apply, oftentimes we cannot avoid ſeeing our ſelves engaged with them in wicked conteſtations.

It is a hard thing, Brethren, ſaith St. Auſtin, in Joan. Tr. 35. *to be at quiet with all the World, and to conteſt with no Man. God calls us to an agreement, he commands us to be peaceable. 'Tis the mark we ought to aim at, and we ought to uſe all our endeavours to arrive at perfect peace. Nevertheleſs it happens often that we fall into diſpute with thoſe we would ſerve. A Man is in an error, you deſire to lead him back into the way of life, he reſiſts you with a ſharp wit. 'Tis thus the Pagans and Hereticks reſiſt thoſe who oppoſe the Errors and Doctrins of the Devil, whereunto they cleave ſo faſt. A bad Catholick will not live well, and you are obliged to reprove him though he be in the boſom of the Church. What troubles have we not to ſeek out ways to correct him, to be able to give a favourable account of him to a common Maſter? How many ſee we ſpring thus in all parts from the occaſions of conteſts and diſputes? It happens often then that being caſt down with trouble, we ſay within our ſelves, What have I to do to ſuffer ſo many contradictions on the behalf of thoſe who return me bad for good? I will procure their happineſs, and they will loſe themſelves. I conſume my life in conteſting, I have no Peace nor Quiet, I do nothing but procure my ſelf Enemies, of thoſe who ſhould have an affection for me, if they did conſider that which I have for them; why do we always continue in theſe troubles and ſufferings? Were it not better to buſie our ſelves about our own occaſions, to rob our ſelves of all, and to be content in praying to God? But ſhut up your ſelf in your ſelf as much as you will, if you have begun to follow God, you will find a contradiction there; and what contradiction? The Fleſh ſtrives againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.*

If it be a difficult thing to ſerve Men, it is no leſs to defend our ſelves from them. For there is nothing in the World which may not be contagious, its Maxims, Spirit, Paſſions are communicated inſenſibly to thoſe who live therein. We find our ſelves, without thinking

ing thereof, covered with its duſt; and we loſe truth in the obſcurity it cauſeth.

The ſight of a Perſon abſolutely worldly imprints I know not what Evils in the Soul of a good Man. For there is as it were a hidden Air in the Minds of all wicked Men, which communicates it ſelf more inſenſibly into Souls which have ſome commerce with them, than the Air of Bodies infected with the Plague doth communicate it ſelf to thoſe who approach it. *Letter of M. de S. Ceran. Tom.* 1. *l.* 56. *See Tom.* 2. *Letter F.*

Thoſe who have known the World very well, repreſent it to us as a great Fire, or rather as a ſource of Fires made of the tripple Concupiſcence which reigns there, whoſe flames ſpreading themſelves over all parts, do devour Souls by the boiſterouſneſs of the Fire which iſſues out. Theſe boiſterous ſtorms enter by the Eyes and the Ears into the ſubſtance of the Soul, and makes her loſe the life of the Spirit, in leaving her that of the Body, and they enter in divers and ſundry manners, according to the ſeveral paſſions they excite in the Heart. Sometimes they poiſon it by a mortal ſweetneſs, ſometimes they caſt it down by a criminal timidity, ſometimes they exaſperate it by hatred and wrath. For all is dangerous in the World; its friendſhip as well as its hatred, its careſſes as well as its perſecutions. All this ſerves to tempt the Soul, and often occaſions ſcandal and a relapſe.

If the World, wherein the Devil reigns, were ſeparated by ſome ſenſible marks from that where he reigns not, perhaps we might take ſome Meaſures to guide our ſelves therein ſurely. But it is not ſo; all is covered with darkneſs in this life; the good and bad are not only mingled, but confounded there; they are only diſtinguiſhed by the bottom of the Heart, which is not ſeen, and whereof it is not permitted to judge. Thus by thinking to be united to honeſt Men, and to find amongſt them true Friends, we many times find our ſelves united to wicked and envious Men, and indeed Enemies.

To become ſuch, they need only diſcover ſharp and wicked Paſſions againſt us, it ſufficeth that they have Intentions

tentions contrary to ours. " Who, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, can " doubt but that they are our Enemies, ſeeing they have " a deſign to render us Companions of their Puniſh- " ments? And 'tis a great thing, adds he, to be ſtruck " every day with their Diſcourſes, and not go aſide " from the way of God. For the Soul often willing to " go to God, is ſeized with fear, and ſtaggers in the " way; ſhe dares not accompliſh her deſires which are " good, for fear of ſhocking thoſe with whom ſhe lives, " who love and ſeek tranſitory and periſhable Goods. *Et magnum eſt inter eorum verba verſari quotidie & non excidere de itinere præceptorum Dei. Sæpe enim mens tentans pergere in Deum, concuſſa in ipſo itinere trepidat, & plerumque propterea non implet bonum propoſitum, ne offendat eos cum quibus vivat, alia bona peritura & tranſeuntia diligentes.*

Nevertheleſs we muſt grant, That there is ſome conſolation in the obligation, or ſtrict alliance we may have with vertuous Men; and 'twas the only one St. *Auſtin* found in this life. But with how many bitterneſſes is this conſolation mingled? Even when we have the moſt reaſon to be ſatisfied with them, they only then render us moſt miſerable; all their Evils becoming common to us. So human Friendſhip of it ſelf is only an extenſion of our Miſeries, becauſe we are expoſed thereunto, not only in our proper Perſons, but alſo in that of our Friends; 'tis a multiplication of fears, ſadneſſes, and melancholy. But what is more troubleſome, is, That as thoſe with whom we contract theſe ſtrict ties are Men, we are often deceived by them, and we often diſcover in them afterwards ſome incommodious defects, which we ſcarcely expected. What care ſoever we apply, not to ſhock them, we ſee them oftentimes wax cold towards us upon theſe Suſpicions, theſe Reports, and theſe ill grounded Imaginations. They let themſelves be tired ſometimes with us, through a pure Inconſtancy, or by new Paſſions wherein they are engaged. If we be reſerved towards them, they complain; if we be too free, they abuſe it. It ſufficeth them often to have an averſion for us, to believe that we

we have no eſteem for them. So after a Familiarity of many years, we find our ſelves many times leſs united, than if we had never ſeen them. And there are very few Contracts among Men which are not terminated, and which are not reduced at laſt to meer ſimple Civilities, by this means, without any true Union.

Where can we find Perſons who concern themſelves ſeriouſly about our Salvation; who inſinuate themſelvs into our Spiritual and Temporal Occaſions; who dream of preventing what may hurt us, and to uphold us in our Weakneſſes? Every one thinks of himſelf in this world, and is as it were quite ſeparated from others. We ſee almoſt no where any true Union; and we ſee but too much amongſt Chriſtians the accompliſhment of the Threat which *Jeremiah* made to the *Jews*, c. 9. v. 4. *That every brother ſhould ſet ſnares for his brother, and that every friend ſhould uſe deceit and artifice: Quia omnis frater ſupplantans ſupplantabit, & omnis amicus fraudulenter incedit:* And that they ſhould render *Jeruſalem* as a heap of ſand, *Jer.* 9. 12. *Et dabo Jeruſalem in acervos arenæ.* For the Church indeed is almoſt compoſed of nothing but a heap of Sand, that is to ſay, of dry Members, which are not united together by an interior Union of Gods Spirit, but by an exterior Compoſition, forming a kind of Society which edifies little, and which is ready to be diſunited at every blaſt of wind.

What is yet ſtranger, is, That this diſunion hath not only place in the great Society of the Church, becauſe of the wicked who fill it, but we obſerve it in almoſt all particular Societies, and even in that of the moſt Religious Men. All there is filled with interior Diviſions of Mind and of Sentiments, and exterior Peace is conſerved thereby only becauſe every one hides himſelf, huſbands himſelf, and diſſembles his Thoughts from others.

In fine, Although we have found friends exempt from all faults, we ought always to fear leſt they change, ſaith Saint *Auſtin*, in *Pſal.* 85. as we ought to fear our ſelves. Thus as wicked Mens malice is a continual cauſe of grief, the uncertainty of good Mens perſeverance is

a continual cauſe of unquietneſs. Who will be aſtoniſhed after that that St. *Auſtin* maintains, That pious men are always afflicted in this Life, and that we need only to walk in the way of God to be perſecuted? *Ambulet per viam anguſtam & incipiat pie vivere in Chriſto, & neceſſe eſt ut perſecutionem patiatur*; ſince that being afflicted as they are with the diſorders and ſcandals of the world, and the inſtability of good men, theſe kind of Perſecutions can never be wanting to them.

'Tis true, There are very few who reſent theſe pains in this nature; and the wicked, who make up the greateſt number, are no ways moved thereat: But they are ſo far from being happy thereby, 'tis that which on the contrary cauſes the heighth of their miſery. For this inſenſibility comes from the blindneſs of the Underſtanding, and the obdurateneſs of the Heart. They are all covered with horrible and mortal wounds; they are deprived of all true Good; they are the Object of God's wrath; they are the Paſtime of the Devils, who domineer over them, who move them, who lead them into Hell, and they neither ſee nor perceive any thing thereof.

Although they ſhould enjoy with that all Earthly Goods, and be exempt from all Evils of this Life, they ſhould nevertheleſs be very miſerable, and their falſe Felicity ought to paſs for nothing but a true Miſery. *Falſa fœlicitas vera miſeria*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in *Pſal.* 85. But often alſo they are not temporally happy: God's Juſtice does not ceaſe to make them feel it, and to trouble their miſerable Pleaſures. The world hath its Bitterneſſes for them, as well as for vertuous Men. They are no more exempt from Loſſes than others, from Maladies, and Sickneſſes, and other Accidents, to which Men are expoſed; and they are ſo much more ſenſible thereof, by how much more they love the Goods which are forced from them by theſe Accidents. They are pure Evils for them, as finding nothing in them whereby they can receive any comfort. They can neither go out of themſelves, becauſe they find nothing but Afflictions; nor enter into themſelves, becauſe they find nothing

thing that's Good. *Non eſt quo exeat quia dura ſunt, non eſt quo intret quia mala ſunt.* Even when they ſhall not have outwardly any cauſe of Affliction, their Paſſions make Troubles ariſe within them, which permit them not to enjoy any true repoſe. Thus although it may be generally true of all Men, as well good as bad, that 'tis impoſſible in this Life to be free from Fear, Labour, Grief, and Danger; this nevertheleſs is principally true of the wicked: They are incapable of Reſt, of Peace, and Joy; and their Lives are ſo much more miſerable, and ſo much more to be complained of, by how much leſs they know their Miſeries, and are concerned for them; *tanto magis flenda, quanto minus fletur.*

CHAP. VII.

The firſt manner of conceiving Heavenly Felicity, by the exemption from the Evils of this Life.

THE Proſpect we have of the Miſeries of this Life, ought not only to free us from and make us hate them; it ought alſo to be to us as a Rule to raiſe us to the knowledge of the Heavenly Life, ſeeing that the exemption from theſe Miſeries makes up a part of the Happineſs which we expect. And therefore the Scripture often repreſents it to us under this Idea. It makes us conſider, that thereby we are delivered from the neceſſity of Death, and from all occaſions of Tears which we have in this World. *God*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, cap. 25. v. 8: *will deſtroy death for ever, and our Lord God will dry up the tears of all eyes, and will blot out from the face of the Earth the reproach of his People; for 'tis our Lord who hath ſpoken:* It promiſeth an abſolute deliverance from all our Enemies, that is to ſay, from the Devils, from the Wicked, from our Paſſions, and from our Sins. *You ſhall hear ſpeak no more*, ſaith the ſame Prophet, cap. 60. ver. 8. *of violence in your Land, nor of deſtruction and oppreſſion; ſalvation ſhall environ your walls, and praiſes ſhall*

ring at your doors. It makes us hope for an exemption from all Neceſſities which ſpring from our Mortality, and which render the Souls dull and heavy. *They ſhall have no more,* ſaith he, *hunger nor thirſt, heat nor the Sun ſhall not burn them, becauſe he who is full of mercy from them ſhall conduct them, and lead them to drink at the fountain head. Your Sun ſhall ſet no more, and your Moon ſhall ſuffer no more decreaſe; becauſe our Lord will be your eternal Torch, and the days of your Tears ſhall be finiſhed.*

'Tis upon this Model St. *Auſtin,* in divers places of his Works, makes the exemption from Miſeries and Neceſſities of this preſent Life appear in the pourtraicture of Beatitude, whereof he endeavours to imprint a Love and Deſire in Chriſtians. *We ſhall, ſaith he,* de Symb. ad Catech. lib. 2. cap. 22. *have no more need of Clothes in this moſt happy Life, ſeeing we ſhall there be clothed with Immortality; we ſhall not want Food, ſeeing our Souls ſhall there be ſatisfied with the preſence of the Bread of Life, which is deſcended from Heaven for our Salvation; we ſhall have wherewith to quench our thirſt, being we ſhall be neer unto the Fountain of Life. There we ſhall be free from Heat, becauſe we ſhall find our Refreſhment under the Wings of him who will protect us for all Eternity. There we ſhall ſuffer no Cold, being we ſhall there have a Sun which will warm our Hearts by the heat of his Love. There we ſhall never be weary, becauſe we ſhall have him with us who is our Strength. There will be no Traffick, no Slavery, no troubleſom nor laborious Works.*

Wherefore, ſaith he, in another place, *is Man renewed again? 'Tis to deſire heavenly and eternal things, and to ſigh after this divine Country, where we may enjoy a full Security, where we no more ſhall loſe our Friends, where we ſhall fear no Enemies, where we ſhall be filled with holy affections, where we ſhall be without care for any thing, where no Man is born, becauſe no Man dies there, where goods grow no more, becauſe they receive there no diminution; where we have neither hunger nor thirſt, but where we ſhall be filled with immortality and nouriſhed with truth it ſelf.*

After

After he hath repreſented in his Sermon upon the 84. *Pſalm*, That there is no peace in the World, that we muſt be there always at ſtrife with the Devils, with our concupiſcences, with tentations, with evil thoughts and deſires, with hunger and thirſt, with wearineſs and ſleep, having ſhewn that the comforts and miſeries which ſpring from our mortality, will become mortal by their continuation, that to die 'tis ſufficent continually to eat, to faſt, to ſit, to walk, to watch, and to ſleep; that ſo we may not hope for peace, but *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up by our Victory*, which will give us eternal reſt, he cries out, *O Brethren, we ſhall be in a certain City, of which I would never ceaſe ſpeaking, principally when ſcandals are augmented. Who would not wiſh for this place of peace, from whence no Friend will ever depart, and whereinto no Enemy ſhall be able to find entrance; where there be no more tempters, no more ſeditious Men, nor none who divide the People of God, no more Diabolical Miniſters who tire and trouble the Church of God, being that the Prince himſelf ſhall have been caſt into everlaſting Fire, with all thoſe who follow his deſigns, and are not ſeparated from him? 'Twill be then there will be a perfect peace for all Gods Children, becauſe they ſhall love each other perfectly, ſeeing themſelves repleniſht with God: when God ſhall be all in all, when ſhe ſhall be the common ſpectacle, the common poſſeſſion, the common peace of all his Elect, and that he himſelf ſhall be all things to us.*

'Tis through the difference there is betwixt an Earthly and Heavenly life, that he delivers this in another place of the ſame work. In *Pſal.* 49. *We do*, ſaith he, *good Works in this life, in giving Bread to thoſe who want, receiving Strangers into our Houſes*, &c. *But all that, is it not mingled with miſery and affliction? For we cannot practiſe mercy, if there be no miſerable People; then ſeeing there muſt be miſerable People to exerciſe it, is it not a quite contrary happineſs to be in a place, where none needs aſſiſtance, becauſe none have need of nouriſhment? where there are no Strangers to be lodged in their Houſes, no Naked to Cloath, no Sick to viſit, no Quarrels to compoſe? where all is perfect, all in health, all is true, all eternal? where Juſtice will*

be our bread, Wiſdom our drink, Immortality our cloathing? where we ſhall have Heaven for our our eternal Houſe? where wearineſs ſhall not make us yield to ſleep? where there will be no more death, no more diviſions, but where we ſhall enjoy everlaſting peace and quiet, and joy and juſtice?

This makes him conclude, That there is nothing but Poverty in this World, Sickneſs, Infirmities, Weakneſs, Imperfection, Neceſſity, and that true Health and perfect Juſtice are only in Heaven.

In this holy City, there will be true riches, becauſe there we ſhall want nothing, and effectually we ſhall need nothing. There we ſhall have perfect health, becauſe death ſhall be deſtroyed there, and this Corruptible body ſhall be cloathed again with Incorruptibility. There we ſhall have true juſtice, becauſe there we cannot do any bad or wicked action, and we ſhall be alſo uncapable of having any evil thoughts. Aug. *in* Pſal. 122.

If the Saints propoſed to themſelves theſe Objects without fear of altering the purity of their love; who ought to ſcruple propoſing them to themſelves? and who ought not to acknowledge that 'tis a great fault to be ſo little entertained with theſe thoughts, and to ſigh ſo little after this happy ſtate, ſo different from ours, where we ſhall enjoy an unalterable peace, no Enemies to contend with; where we ſhall be troubled no more with either inward or outward temptation; where the Body ſhall contend no more againſt the Spirit; the Soul ſhall be no more preſſed down by the weight and the inclinations of the fleſh; the Spirit no more troubled nor buſied with cares, inquietudes, or with vain and unprofitable thoughts; the Heart ſhall be no more ſeparated and torn by ſo many different deſires; where there ſhall be no more ſcandals, infidelities, artifices, ſuſpicions: where we ſhall no more ſee things in this thick cloud, which diſcovers only to us as it were a confuſed ſhadow of truth; and laſtly, where God ſhall reign abſolutely over us, and ſhall be the perpetual object of our knowledge and love?

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

That we ought not to form to our ſelves the Idea of a Carnal Beatitude.

ALthough the holy Fathers have approved that Chriſtians ſhould comprehend the deliverance from the Evils of this preſent life by the Sovereign happineſs which is promiſed us in Heaven, and that they themſelves have given us the example to deſire this perfect peace, which ſhall not be troubled with any diſquiet, nor any grief, and which ſhall place the Soul in a full and entire joy; yet they have found that we may abuſe theſe words, and take occaſion from thence to frame an Idea of a felicity quite carnal, by not propoſing to our ſelves other Goods in the other life, than thoſe we may enjoy in this, as riches, honours, Magnificent ſhews, quietneſs of the Mind, and laſtly, pleaſures which ſpring from ſelf-love.

Therefore they have had a care to deſtroy theſe falſe Ideas, to enable us to form true ones.

Worldly Men, ſaith St. Auſtin *in* Pſal. 86. *are all tranſported by their pleaſures and divertiſements. Nevertheleſs our Lord God lets us know that the Wicked are incapable of joy. 'Tis becauſe there is another pleaſure and another joy, which the Eye hath not ſeen, which the Ear has not heard, and which the Wit of Man can never conceive. 'Tis the joy of thoſe who dwell with thee, O my God. Let us prepare our ſelves for this joy, of which we may find ſome footſteps in the World, but which are far ſhort of truth. Let us be very careful not to propoſe to our ſelves pleaſures like to thoſe we taſte upon Earth; otherwiſe all the mitigation whereby we abſtain from Worldly pleaſures, would only be a kind of avarice. There are ſome Perſons who faſt only to prepare themſelves for better chear. Faſting is a great thing, the intention of it is to moderate concupiſcence; and yet ſometimes we make uſe of it to ſatisfie our inordinate deſires. If you believe then, Brethren, that in this Country, whereunto we are called by the Heavenly Trumpet we ought to have pleaſures like thoſe of this World, and that now*

we abſtain from them only to enjoy them more plentifully in the other life, you reſemble thoſe who faſt to diſpoſe themſelves for a great feaſt, and who are temperate through a greater intemperance. Baniſh from your thoughts theſe baſe and carnal imaginations, prepare your ſelf for ſome ineffable thing, purifie your heart from all terreſtrial and ſecular affections. We ſhall ſee an object which will render us happy, and this ſingle object will ſuffice us.

We ſhall be repleniſht with the Goods of your Houſe, ſaith he, in another place, in Pſal. 64. *But what are the goods of this Houſe? ſhall we imagine, Brethren, a magnificent Palace, filled with all ſorts of riches, Gold and Silver Veſſels, Officers, Horſes, and ſhall we fancy to our ſelves Pictures, Marble, Wainſcoting, Columns and rich Apartments? There are ſome who love theſe things, but theſe things belong to* Babylon. *Lop off all theſe deſires, O ye Citizens of* Jeruſalem, *and if you will return to your Country, do not place your joy in your Baniſhment and Exile, covet the Houſe of God, covet the Goods of this Houſe, but do not covet the like to thoſe which you might have ſeen and which you may deſire to have for your Houſe here upon Earth, either for your Neighbour, or for your Friend. The Goods of the Houſe of God are not of this Nature.* We ſhall be repleniſht, *ſaith the Prophet,* with the Goods of your Houſe, your Temple is Holy, it is wonderful in Juſtice. *Behold the Goods of this Houſe! He does not ſay that this Temple is admirable in Columns, in Marble, in Wainſcoting; but that 'tis admirable in Juſtice. You have exterior Eyes to ſee Gold and Marble, but the Eye by which we ſee Beauty and Juſtice is interior.*

We muſt not therefore deceive our ſelves, nor ſtretch forth concupiſcence even to Heaven, by deſiring there the enjoyment of it. God will only be the portion of his Elect. He alone will compleat their felicity. Their only joy ſhall be to ſee him, love him, to be ſubject to him, to ſee him rule over them, and to have nothing in them oppoſite to his Juſtice. See here what the ground of their happineſs will be, they will not conſider all the reſt, but in relation to this eſſential good.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

A larger explication of the eſſential Beatitude of the Saints.

'TIS a very ſtrange thing that we muſt be obliged to prove to Men that the ſight and love of God are capable to make them happy. For 'tis like proving to them that the light is able to illuminate them; ſince that God being eſſentially the Sovereign good, produceth alſo by his poſſeſſion neceſſarily perfect happineſs, as light neceſſarily chaſeth away darkneſs. However, it is true, that although Chriſtians have no need of reaſons and proofs, to believe in general that their happineſs conſiſts in ſeeing and loving God, they have need thereof to be made concerned for this truth. The lively Idea they have of ſenſual Pleaſures, makes them be but little ſenſible of Spiritual ones; they are troubled to conceive how we may be happy by a ſight and love, which ſhall have nothing that's ſenſible.

'Tis then neceſſary to aſſiſt them in this point, to guide them, as it were, by degrees to the knowledge of true felicity, and ſee here how St. *Auſtin* does it ordinarily. There are very few amongſt thoſe who have any love for piety, who may not ſometimes be touched with ſenſible affection for perſons in whom they have ſeen great and eminent virtues: And as it is not the ſhape of theſe perſons they love, nor their natural wit, it is evident that what they like in them, is the excellency of their Juſtice and Charity, and Virtue. *If Juſtice, ſaith St.* Auſtin, *in* Pſal. 64. *had no Beauty, How could a juſt and virtuous old Man be beloved? What preſents he to our Eyes that can be pleaſing? Crooked Members, a wrinkled Forehead, an univerſal Weakneſs. But, perhaps, being uncapable to pleaſe the Eyes, he has wherewith to ſatisfy the Ears. By what words, by what charm is he able to do it? Although he might have had a voice in his younger days, age may have robbed him of it; ſcarcely can he be heard, ſo that he is far from being able to pleaſe in ſpeaking. Nevertheleſs if this old Man be juſt, if he do not deſire other Men's goods*

goods, if he give wiſe counſel, if he have a right judgment of things, and if he be ready to deliver his Body broken as it is, for the Truth, as many Martyrs have done in this age, we ceaſe not to love him; and as we ſhall diſcover in him nothing that's beautiful to the Eyes of the fleſh, we ought to conclude from thence, that there is a certain Beauty of Juſtice, which is ſeen with the Eyes of the Heart, and which Men have very much loved in the Martyrs, even when their Members were rent in pieces by wild Beaſts; when they were covered all over with Blood; when their Entrails were torn by the Teeth of mad Beaſts; Eyes ſaw nothing which did not give them horror. What then was it which made theſe Martyrs loved in this ſtate, if it were not the Beauty of Juſtice which remained entire in thoſe mangled Members?

Now if Juſtice may be beloved, there may be Joy in the contemplation of it; becauſe there is a pleaſure in ſeeing and knowing what we love; and there is ſo much more thereof, by how much the love is greater, and the knowledge more clear. If the contemplation of Juſtice do not touch us very ſenſibly in this life, 'tis becauſe we know it not well, and love it but weakly. But yet it is eaſie to comprehend that by augmenting this love and this knowledge, the pleaſure of the Soul ought to encreaſe proportionably.

Now 'tis what properly happens in the other life: We ſhall there ſee Juſtice it ſelf, not in troubled Rivolets, and disfigured Images, but in its own Source. It will manifeſt it ſelf to us in all its Beauty, in all its Grandeur, and in all its Majeſty.

And as this Juſtice is God it ſelf, this proſpect will excite tranſports and raviſhments of Love and Joy, ſo lively and ardent, that no human Capacity can be able to comprehend the impetuoſity and the violence of it. But what we may comprehend is, that their enjoyment of this love, which is in the poſſeſſion of its Object, ought to produce by neceſſity an ineffable Joy and Pleaſure in the Soul, or rather it is it ſelf this Joy and Pleaſure, being that Joy is nothing but a Love enjoying what it Loves.

By

By this 'tis alſo evident, That the love of God which ſhall cauſe the felicity of the Saints, ſhall have nothing of mercenary nor intereſted, but ſhall be perfectly cleanſed from all mixture of ſelf-love; for this love being the love of Juſtice, it does not relate God to Man, but Man to God. The Spirit of the happy will be quite ſtruck through with the infinite excellency and greatneſs of God, and the meanneſs and wretchedneſs of Creatures, with the Juſtice of the right God hath over them, which obliges them to relate all their Being and all Actions to his Glory, with the diſmal Unjuſtice of a Creature who ſubſtracts himſelf from his Order, who withdraws himſelf from his Dependence, and who makes himſelf his own Deſtruction. And theſe lights wherewith they ſhall all be filled, being joyned to the ardent love of this Juſtice which preſcribes them theſe Duties, will incline them to annihilate themſelves continually before the Majeſty of God, and to prefer him before themſelves through an eternal love, as St. *Auſtin* ſays. They ſhall place their happineſs in a condeſcending to his Will, and they ſhall be by this means uncapable of the leaſt ſeeking of ſelf-intereſt.

But in not ſeeking themſelves at all, they ſhall not be leſs happy. God's Greatneſs, Glory, and his Felicity will cauſe their Joy, and God communicating himſelf to them with an ineffable effuſion, ſhall unite them ſo ſtrictly to his Being, that they ſhall be as it were plunged in him, and they ſhall participate of his Greatneſs and of his Felicity.

Mens Minds are feeble in this life to comprehend the Joy, which the poſſeſſion of God will produce in the happy Souls. Therefore St. *Paul* expreſſes it, no otherwiſe than by ſaying, *The eye hath not ſeen, nor the ear hath not heard, what God has provided for thoſe who love him*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. We can only judge that it ſhall be ſomething inconceivable, ſeeing 'twill be the effect of God's Magnificence, and the accompliſhment of his eternal Love for his Elect.

Nevertheleſs, to form ſome Idea thereof, it is good to co duct the Underſtanding through theſe Degrees.

Although

Although we ſee Creatures only in company and ſeparately, and that the knowledge we have of them be extreamly limited; yet it cannot be denied but that there is ſome Pleaſure in contemplating Beauty.

This Pleaſure would be greater, if our Minds becoming larger could conceive many of them together.

What would it be then, if it were able to comprehend them all at a time, and contemplate the marvelous relations they have together to frame the Beauty of the whole Univerſe?

It ſeems that this ſpectacle might be capable to ſatisfie and fill Man's Mind, and yet 'tis nothing in compariſon of that which the happy Souls enjoy. They ſee all Creatures in God, but moreover they ſee the God of all Creatures, and this ſight makes all Creatures appear to them but as nothing, and that they diſappear preſently, ſo much they are filled with the greatneſs and the excellency of their Creator.

St. *Auſtin* hath not diſdained to make uſe of theſe Degrees, to raiſe us to the knowledge of a ſovereign Good: *Conſider*, ſaith he, *in* Pſal. 84. *That all you ſee that's fair and excellent in the World, all therein that draws your hearts, is nothing but the handiwork of God; now if theſe things have ſo much beauty, What ought we to judge of God? If there be ſo much greatneſs in his works, What is the greatneſs he poſſeſſeth in himſelf? Si hæc pulchra ſunt, quid eſt ipſe? Si hæc magna ſunt, quantus eſt ipſe?*

If you find ſo many pleaſures, ſaith he, in another place, *in* Pſal. 26. *in what you call wealth; in that wealth, ſay I, which of it ſelf is no wealth, becauſe it is moveable, and nothing that's moveable can be wealth of it ſelf: What then will be the pleaſure in the contemplation of unchangeable and eternal wealth, which remains always in the ſame ſtate; ſeeing all things which you call wealth, cannot pleaſe you, if it be not wealth, and it cannot be wealth except it be borrowed from the bounty of him who is it of himſelf?*

If all Creatures be in reſpect of God, but as a drop of Water is to the main Ocean, What can all the conſolations be which Creatures are able to give us, but a ſmall ſhare or part of this drop, which entring into the Heart

Heart of Man, leaves him as ſmall as he was before? But when God ſhall enter in the ſame manner as he ſhall enter by Glory, 'tis an impetuous River, 'tis a torrent of Delights, according to the Scripture; it enlargeth and dilateth Man's Heart; it extends and raiſeth it infinitely beyond the boundaries of its Nature, that it may receive this abundance of Joy, wherewith it will take pleaſure to inebriate it, as the Prophet ſpeaks. *Inebriabuntur ab ubertate Domus tuæ.*

The poſſeſſion of God will repleniſh in ſuch a manner all the neceſſities, and all the deſires of the Soul, that all her capacity of loving, deſiring, and enjoying, will be abſolutely drained, and ſhe will be unfit to deſire and to love any thing without God, becauſe ſhe will find there all, and God will be all things to her. *Gold,* ſaith St. *Auſtin, in* Pſal. 33. *is not the ſame here as Silver, nor Wine the ſame as Bread; Light is not Drink; but God is all to thoſe who poſſeſs him. He will be our Food, by warranting us from Hunger; our Drink, in ſatisfying our Thirſt; our Light, in enlightening our Darkneſs; our Support, in preſerving us from becoming Weak. He will poſſeſs us abſolutely, in giving himſelf to us. We ſhall not do one another wrong by poſſeſſing him. Every one ſhall poſſeſs him thus entirely, but he ſhall not hinder another likewiſe from poſſeſſing him, becauſe we ſhall all be but as one, and God ſhall poſſeſs us all in unity and totally.*

But what Idea ſoever may be formed of this ſovereign Happineſs, by the means of theſe Images, it muſt be allowed that all is nothing, and even that the Soul is not capable in this life neither to conceive it, nor to undergo it. For it muſt needs be, that God to render her ſuſceptible of theſe divine Communications, and of this torrent of Delights he reſerves for her, raiſe her to another ſtate, and render her reſembling him, in a manner ſo Divine, that St. *Auſtin* is not afraid to ſay, That when this ineffable Joy ſhall be acknowledged by us, human Underſtanding ſhall periſh, and become Divine: In *Pſal.* 35. *Cum accepta fuerit iſta ineffablis Lætitia, perit quodammodo Mens humana, & fit divina.* St. *Gregory* of *Nazianzen, in* Or. 15. P. 302. *ſaith,* That the Trinity

Trinity disperseth it self into all our Souls, τρίαδος ὁλῆς ὁλῆ μεγνυμένης. And he expresseth in many places the state of the Blessed, by that of being made Divine.

If we could have any knowledge thereof, it should be by those to whom God hath given sometimes, even in this life, some drops of this divine Water, wherewith he will inebriate the Saints in Heaven: And those who have made this happy tryal, do all declare, that all the Joys of this World are nothing in comparison of those, which he will cause Souls to feel in those happy moments. 'Tis but reading what St. *Teresa*, St. *Bernard*, St. *Austin*, and all those whom we have no reason to suspect, would distribute unto us, Imaginations and Dreams; or rather, we need but read what the Evangelist saith thereof, when relating to us that light spark of Glory which Jesus Christ shewed to his Disciples upon Mount *Tabor*, he represents them as out of themselves, and transported with what they saw.

Notwithstanding, if human Joys be nothing in comparison of those which God gives to his Saints yet living, it is certain also, that all the Joys of living Saints are yet nothing in comparison of those of the other life. It is always true to say, that we know not God here, but as through a Glass and by an Enigm. *Videmus per speculum & in Enigmate.* But we do not see him openly; and by the means of these divine Tasts, all these celestial Joys that these Saints, Men and Women, have experienced, are only some drops of this Ocean whereinto the Blessed are plunged, little rays of this immense light which illuminates them, and light sparks of this great fire of love which inflames them.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the eternal Employment of the Bleſſed.

AS Men's Pleaſure conſiſts here below in a variety of Action, and all long Employments tire their Spirits as well as their Bodies; they are troubled at firſt to comprehend what is ſaid concerning the lives of the Bleſſed, that it will not have that viciſſitude of Actions wherewith that of Men is divertiſed upon Earth; and the Fathers who humble themſelves ſometimes even to diſperſe the moſt frivolous doubts, have not been unmindful of this. St. *Auſtin* treats thereof in divers places, and is always careful in giving us a true Idea of the eternal Employ of the Bleſſed, to go beyond theſe mean and human Thoughts.

He does it ſometimes more obſcurely, as at the end of one of his Sermons *de Temp. Ser.* 153. where he ſpeaks thereof in theſe Terms. *When we ſhall be in the houſe God, which is in Heaven, we ſhall not only praiſe God during the fifty days of the Reſurrection; we ſhall have no other employ there for all Eternity; we ſhall ſee him, we ſhall love him, and we ſhall praiſe him; what we ſhall ſee will never leſſen in our Eyes; what we ſhall love will never periſh; and what we ſhall praiſe ſhall never ceaſe to deſerve our praiſes. All will be eternal, and without end, in that life.*

Theſe Words make us ſee at the ſame time, that a heavenly Life can never change, and why it is incapable thereof. It is impoſſible to ſee God, and not to love him; nor to love him perfectly without ſeeing him. So the ſight of God neceſſarily produceth Love, and Love Praiſes; and all theſe Actions ſhall never end, becauſe what inclines us to alter and change our Actions in this life, ſhall not be found in the other.

We ceaſe beholding certain Objects with pleaſure, and we are inclined to change them, becauſe we find therein ſome faults; and all that is in the World being limited, we deſire to ſee ſomething more. It's then the

the fault of the Objects which makes us weary of them. Now this never happens in ſeeing God; for we never obſerve there any defects, nor any limits; ſo that we are never weary. *Quid videbimus non deficiet.* And as we are never weary of ſeeing him, and as he is always preſent with the Soul, ſhe cannot ceaſe to love him, nor conſequently to praiſe him; 'tis what this holy Doctor expreſſes in another place, in theſe Terms: *Happy, ſaith he, are thoſe who ſhall dwell in thy Houſe:* Beati quia habitant in domo tua Domine. *But what ſhall they do there? They ſhall praiſe you, adds the Prophet, world without end. Thus all their whole life ſhall be nothing but a continual praiſing of God, and an eternal* Alleluia. *And do not think, Brethren, they can find any diſguſt in this only Occupation, becauſe you cannot praiſe God any long time: There are on the one ſide Neceſſities of life which diſſuade you; and on the other, not ſeeing God, you are not ſo ſenſibly touched. If we could ceaſe loving God in the other life, we ſhould alſo ceaſe praiſing him: But love being eternal, becauſe we can never be filled with ſeeing the beauty of God, do not fear ever ceaſing to praiſe whom you cannot ceaſe to love.* Si deficias ab amore deficies a laude: Si autem amor ſempiternus erit, quia illa inſatiabilis pulchritudo eſt, noli timere ne non poſſis ſemper laudare, quem ſemper poteris amare. *Auguſt.* in *Pſal.* 81.

Therefore to expreſs the Peace, Tranquility, and Repoſe which ſhall accompany this eternal Action of the Bleſſed, he ſays in another place, *That the buſineſs of loving God will be the only employ of thoſe who ſhall have no other; the only labour of thoſe who ſhall be delivered from all labour; the only Action of thoſe who ſhall enjoy a perfect Repoſe; and the only Care of thoſe who ſhall be free from all ſorts of Care and Inquietudes. Erit hoc otioſoram negotium, hoc opus vacantium; hæc actio quietorum, hæc cura ſecurorum.* Aug. *in* Pſal. 110.

But what ſhall be the cauſe of all theſe eternal Praiſes? This is not hard to be underſtood. They ſhall praiſe God for what they ſhall ſee in him, for what ſhall raviſh them, and for what ſhall fill them with Joy and Admiration; for their Praiſes ſhall be nothing but the effuſion of

of their Tranſport and Raptures. They ſhall praiſe him for what he is, for his infinite Greatneſs, his Holineſs, his Mercy, his Juſtice, and his Omnipotency. They ſhall praiſe him becauſe of the Miracles he hath operated. They ſhall praiſe him for the Favours which he hath done them, for the Mercies he hath exerciſed upon them, and all his Elect. Each Elect ſhall praiſe for himſelf, and for all others. They ſhall joyn altogether to ſing for ever God's Mercies towards them, *Miſericordias Domini in æternum cantabo.* Laſtly, They ſhall ſacrifice continually in their Hearts, as it were Holocauſts of Charity; and Jeſus Chriſt joyning his to that of theirs, ſhall offer them without intermiſſion as a Sacrifice of Love to his Father. *Tota iſta redempta civitas, hoc eſt, congregatio ſocietaſque Sanctorum univerſale Sacrificium offertur Deo per Sacerdotem Magnum, qui etiam ſeipſum obtulit pro nobis, ut tanti capitis corpus eſſemus.* Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 10. c. 6.

This is the Idea which ought to be formed concerning the Occupation of the Bleſſed; and though we be far from comprehending this ſtate, and this life, yet we may eaſily comprehend that they cannot be tired with ſo holy an Employment; becauſe we change Actions only to find out others than thoſe we have, and thus the alteration can only be convenient for thoſe who aim at Felicity, and not for thoſe who poſſeſs it.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Peace of a heavenly life.

WE have already given cauſe, by ſeveral things which we have ſaid, to conſider in the lives of the Bleſſed a ſovereign Peace: But the Peace they enjoy is ſo great a Good, that it ought to be particularly conſidered; and this Object is ſo capable of drawing our Hearts, that 'tis juſt to repreſent it apart from the reſt, to the end it may work a great Impreſſion.

We ſee alſo, That 'tis under this Idea that St. *Auſtin* repreſented generally Beatitude; and likewiſe he inſpired ſuch a love into his People of this heavenly Peace, that they could not forbear at the very name of Peace to make a ſhew of their Tranſport, by Acclamations which broke off the Diſcourſe of thoſe who ſpake to them. 'Tis what St. *Auſtin* obſerves himſelf with comfort, in the Sermon he made on the Pſalm *Laude Jeruſalem, Pſal.* 147. For having pronounced theſe Words, *Qui poſuit fines tuos pacem*, he was interrupted by a noiſe of Acclamations; whereupon he ſpake to them in this manner: *'Tis a great comfort to me, Brethren, that the love of Peace can make you ſend forth theſe Acclamations from the very bottom of your Hearts. You have been ſurprized with a ſudden and prompt Joy: I had as yet explicated nothing, but only pronounced the Verſe of the Pſalm, and behold you already tranſported. What is't that forceth theſe Cries from you? The Beauty of Peace hath ſhone in your Souls, and ſtruck your Hearts. There is no more need of my ſpeaking, nor enlarging on theſe Praiſes; the motions of your Hearts have prevented my Words. Let us put off the Praiſes of Peace to the Habitation of Peace. 'Tis there we ſhall praiſe it fully, becauſe we ſhall poſſeſs it perfectly. If we love it already with ſo much fervency, having only an imperfect Idea thereof, How ſhall we love it when we ſhall poſſeſs it in its perfection? I will only tell you then, Beloved Children, O Children of the Kingdom of Heaven, O Citizens of* Jeruſalem, *That the Word* Jeruſalem *ſignifies that* we ſhall ſee Peace there.

This Idea was ſo familiar to him, that in another place he reduceth thereunto all Beauty. *What, ſaith he, in* Pſal. 36. *will be the Pleaſures we ſhall expect? They ſhall be accumulated with an abundance of Joy, anſwers the Prophet. Our Gold ſhall be the Peace; our Silver ſhall be the Peace; our Lands ſhall be the Peace; our God ſhall be our Peace: This Peace ſhall be all things to us. And this Peace is God himſelf, as is ſaid in the ſequel.*

But to lay open what as yet we ſee only confuſedly in theſe general Terms, we muſt conſider with St. *Auſtin, de Civit. Dei, l.* 19. *c.* 12. That as there is no Man

Man who desires not Joy, likewise there is none who wisheth not for Peace; and that even those who make War with themselves, do it only to overcome, and by consequence only to arrive at Peace.

He saith also, *That those who break the Peace, do not break it because they hate it, but to procure another according to their Fancies. Thieves and Robbers conserve Peace with their Companions, to the end they may disturb it Scot-free amongst others. All the World desires to live in Peace, with their Wives, Children, and Families; and even the severity which is used against those who disturb it, hath no other end but to maintain it. This desire of Peace is found amongst the Wicked, as well as amongst the Good: For they would have all things to ply and yield to them, that nothing resist them which is a kind of Peace; and at the same time that they break it with God, by revolting against him, they desire it in their Souls and Bodies, but cannot have it.*

Now although this holy Doctor distinguishes afterwards divers sorts of Peace, of the Body, of the sensitive Soul, and of the reasonable Soul, of the Soul and of the Body, and of the Soul with God, of Men amongst themselves, of a Town, of a State, of the heavenly *Jerusalem*; yet it is visible that the celestial Peace consists in being in a state where our desires may be fully satisfied, where nothing may be that may resist our Wills, because all resistance and all oppositions to our desires, do disturb and trouble the Peace and tranquility of the Soul.

If the Wills of wicked Men could be fully satisfied, they would enjoy Peace; but this cannot be. For besides desiring to be happy without God, is to desire an impossibility; moreover, God's Justice opposes the accomplishment of their desires. They desire Pleasure, and God's Justice overwhelms them with Griefs. They covet Honours, and this Justice heaps Infamies upon them. They are ambitious to have all subject to them, and Justice makes all Creatures revolt against them, as a punishment for their Disobedience.

The *Stoicks* bethought themſelves of an ingenious means to compaſs Peace, if it could have been poſſible for Men, *i.e.* to deſire nothing not in their power; and by this Man's deſires would have been fully ſatisfied, ſeeing by they would have asked nothing but what they ſhould be able to give themſelves.

But they were not careful to conſider that the Soul is not Miſtreſs of her deſires; that there are ſome natural ones which ſhe cannot ſtifle; that ſhe cannot but wiſh not to be deceived, not to ſuffer any harm, and not to die; *Non falli, non offendi, non mori*; that ſhe is made to love; that not finding in her ſelf a perfect good, ſhe muſt ſeek it out of her ſelf, and that 'tis impoſſible that deſiring this good, ſhe can be in Peace whilſt ſhe does not poſſeſs it, being her Will is not ſatisfied, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in Epiſt. 25. *Ubi pax, ibi requies, ubi requies, ibi finis appetendorum.* And conſequently, not poſſeſſing what we wiſh as our end, there is no reſt; and where there is no reſt, there is no Peace.

Thus the *Stoicks* Doctrin, which was the ground of all their Philoſophy, was really but a thought without any ſolidity, and is not the thing wherein the Peace of the Bleſſed conſiſts. They are not exempt from deſires inſeparable from Man's nature, but they are abſolutely from all irregular and illegitimate deſires; ſo God accompliſhing all their juſt deſires, they have none at all which are not abſolutely ſatisfied: So that ſince the beginning of their Happineſs, even to eternity, they ſhall not know any contradiction, nor any oppoſition, neither within nor without them, and this ſhall be their Peace.

They ſhall deſire to be abſolute Maſters of their Bodies, and that it may cauſe no harm to the Soul; and God will grant them this requeſt ſo amply, that they ſhall have nothing to do but to wiſh themſelves in a place, to be there, as St. *Auſtin* ſaith, de Civit. Dei, l. 22. c. 30. *Ubi volet Spiritus, ibi protinus erit Corpus.*

They ſhall deſire not to be deceived, and they ſhall have a clear knowledge of all things, without error, labour, or difficulty, becauſe they ſhall drink Wiſdom even

even at the Fountain head. *Rerum ibi omnium tam ſpecioſa quam certa ſcientia, ſine errore aliquo vel labore, ubi Dei ſapientia de ipſo ſuo fonte potabitur.* Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. 21. c. 24.

They ſhall deſire they may not die, and they ſhall have an entire aſſurance of their eternal Happineſs.

They ſhall deſire perfect Juſtice, and they ſhall be ſo perfectly ſatisfied, that St. *Auſtin* ſaith, in compariſon of this Spring abounding with Juſtice, wherewith they ſhall be filled, all that we can have in this life will be in lieu thereof, but as a drop of Dew given us to aſſwage the miſeries of this life, and to thaw the Ice of Iniquity. In Pſ. 122. *Quantumcunque juſtitiæ in nobis fuerit, vos eſt neſcio quis ad illum Fontem, ad illam Saginam ſtillicidia quædam ſunt, quæ vitam noſtram molliant, & iniquitatem ſolvant.*

They ſhall all be equally filled therewith, by the excluſion from all injuſtice, and all ſtain, all ſelf-love, which will be incompatible with Beatitude, and would change Heaven into Hell.

It is true, they will not all be enriched alike with the gifts of God, and there will be among them ſeveral meaſures of Charity and Light, which will cauſe diverſitie of dwellings in the heavenly *Jeruſalem*; but each one, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, ſhall be perfectly content with his ſhare, and ſhall not bear Malice to thoſe who ſhall have a greater abundance, becauſe the unity of Charity will reign in them. *Non erit invidia imparis Charitatis, quoniam regnabit in omnibus unitas Charitatis.* Aug. Tract. 67. in Joan.

'Tis yet, ſaith he elſewhere, de Civit. Dei. l. 22. c. 30. *one of the great goods of this City, that they do not bear Malice to thoſe whom they ſee above them; and we ſhall wiſh alſo as little to poſſeſs what we ſhall not have received, although we may be perfectly united to him who ſhall receive it, as the Finger deſires not to be the Eye, though the Finger and the Eye do enter into the ſtructure of the ſame Body: Every one will ſo poſſeſs there his ſhare, one more, the other leſs, that he ſhall have the gift of not deſiring more than what he ſhall have received.*

This inequality of gifts ſhall not at all trouble the Peace of this Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, nor ſhall it be altered by the conſideration the juſt ſhall have thereof, the puniſhment of the Wicked, nor likewiſe by that of the digreſſions and of the ſins of our former lives. They ſhall not ſee in all that, any thing but occaſions of praiſing Gods Juſtice and Mercy eternally. They ſhall approve all his actions, both as to themſelves and others, and joyning perfectly their Wills to his, nothing will be oppoſite to their Wills, as nothing is oppoſite to the Will of God.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Unity of the Bleſſed.

David does not only invite us to contemplate the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, but he propoſeth to us moreover, as a motive the moſt capable to incline us thereunto, the Divine union of her Inhabitants: *Jeruſalem, ſaith he*, which is built like a Town, whoſe Inhabitants are united together. *Jeruſalem quæ ædificatur ut civitas, cujus participes ejus in idipſum.*

Indeed there is hardly any Object more ſweet and comfortable, than this Union of the Society of the Elect, But yet to comprehend it better, we muſt extend our minds through all the Degrees of Diſunion and Union which can be obſerved among intelligible Creatures.

Sovereign Diſunion is found in the Society of the Wicked, whether Men or Devils: for it is exteriour and interiour, both together. Each Reprobate, as we have already ſaid, is an Enemy to all the reſt; he hates them all, and is hated of all; he knows their Hatred, and his is known to them. Therefore if there be any Society in them, 'tis but a Society of Place and Torments, a Society the effect whereof is only to afflict one another, and reciprocally to contribute to each others Miſery.

What

What comes neareſt this horrible Diſunion, is that which is found amongſt Men, where the Devil reigns, and is in the Kingdom of Concupiſcence: For, beſides the outward Wars and Diviſions this Diſunion produceth in many, they are all inwardly divided, as all ſeeking their own proper Intereſt.

Corrupt Man loves nothing but himſelf, and can love nothing but in relation to himſelf: ſo that when he finds not this relation, he ceaſes loving, and begins to hate. Therefore if he have not an actual hatred againſt all others, yet he has the Principle thereof. 'Tis but preſenting him the Object, in ſhewing him that ſome one is contrary to his Deſigns, to his Deſires, and to his proper Intereſts, to incline him to hate it actually.

But as this Hatred which Worldly Men have for others, is often included in its Principle; and moreover as they do not know the Heart and Thoughts of one another, they ſometimes think they are loved, or at leaſt are not hated by other Men. Thus their interiour Diſunion, although real, remains yet concealed under the appearances of exteriour Union, to which they are obliged by the ſeveral Neceſſities which render them depending on one another.

From this miſerable Union we may proceed to an Union which may be ſtiled happy, but impoſſible: It's that which is among the true Chriſtians, who have the Holy Ghoſt in their Hearts: For it cannot be denied but that they are united, ſeeing they are animated by the ſame Spirit; and this Spirit making them love God, makes them alſo love one another, God reſiding by his Grace in the Juſt. They aſſiſt one another by the mutual help of their Prayers; and they all participate, in ſome ſort, of the Goods and Evils of each other.

But although this Union may be the greateſt Good belonging to Man in this Life, yet he muſt acknowledge that it is very defective, and mingled with a great quantity of Miſeries.

For, in the firſt place, as true Chriſtians generally do not know one the other; ſo they cannot tell that they are united, and they enjoy not the good of their Union.

The number of true Chriſtians which every man knows, is always very ſmall, and we are not always outwardly very much united with thoſe we know. The variety of Underſtandings, Proſpects and Humours, oftentimes produceth among pious Perſons a kind of exterior diſunion, and the moſt ſtrict Amities are ſubject to wax cold, and to be changed and altered by falſe Reports, Suſpicions, and raſh Judgment. When we ſhall have freed all theſe Faults from the Ties and Obligations we may have to vertuous Men in this World, there reſt two which are inſeparable from them in this life; the one, that we know not evidently the bottom of any Man's Heart; the other, that we cannot be aſſured of a perſeverance in Amity with whomſoever it may be, no more than in other Vertues.

For 'tis by the retrenchment of all theſe defects, that we muſt conceive the perfection of the unity of the Bleſſed. They ſhall not only be all united inwardly and outwardly, but this unity ſhall not be unknown to them. The Hearts of all the Citizens of this City of Peace, ſhall be diſcovered to every of them. They ſhall not ſee in any of theſe Inhabitants any diverſity in Opinions, Deſires, or Intentions. They ſhall all love one another, and they ſhall all know they are loved by them; they ſhall never fear that this love can ever alter by any coldneſs.

In fine, All that the Mind of Man hath poſſibly been able to invent, to form a perfect Idea of Friendſhip, is found there, in a manner, infinitely raiſed above all they have ſaid thereof; for they have been very far from conceiving this mutual penetration of Minds and Hearts, this unity of Lights and Deſires, and this incredible ardour of love which is found in Heaven.

Now if the greateſt of all earthly Goods be to love a ſmall number of People, and to know that one is loved, and even to open ones Heart to others with an entire confidence; What Joy ought this perfect union which it hath with all others, to produce in the Hearts of all the Elect? To ſee in them the ardent ſentiments of Charity which they have for it, and to know alſo

that

that they ſee theirs; to love them perfectly, and to ſee them perfectly happy? May not it truly be ſaid, That they all enjoy thus a multiplied and redoubled Felicity by that of others; and that each Elect ſhall not only be happy in his proper Perſon, but in the Perſons of others, being he ſhall look upon their Happineſs as his own?

What Joy to be united to ſo many Saints, of whom we hear ſpoken in the Church-Books? To know the ways by which God hath conducted them to the Happineſs they poſſeſs, and all the motions which he has formed in their Hearts? To know all that's paſſed betwixt God and them, and what remains unknown to Men? To know entirely this innumerable Multitude, whereof we know ſo little? To penetrate into the Hearts of the Patriarchs, Prophets, the Bleſſed Virgin, the Apoſtles, and all the Saints both known and unknown? To know not only the Hiſtory of the whole celeſtial *Jeruſalem*, which compriſeth the whole Conduct of God upon the Elect, but to know it by themſelves, and by the manifeſtation of their Hearts? To ſee the End, the Progreſs, and the Accompliſhment of all things, and in what manner all things have been made only for the Elect? O Hiſtory which only deſerves to be the Object of Chriſtians Curioſity, and which ought to blot out in them all other Curioſity! O happy Hiſtory, which only regards the happy, and whoſe knowledge renders us happy!

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Dominion of the Bleſſed.

THere is no doubt to be made but the Bleſſed do all poſſeſs a Dominion or Authority, ſeeing that *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf declared them Kings, in his Judgment, when he ſaid to them, *Come, the well-beloved of my Father, poſſeſs the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the World.* 'Tis alſo in conſideration of this ſupreme

preme Honour whereunto they ought to be raiſed, that *David* cried out, *How great, O Lord, is the glory wherewith you have honoured your friends? How ſtrongly is their Principality eſtabliſhed? Nimis honorificati ſunt amici tui, Deus, nimis confortatus eſt principatus eorum.* Pſal. 139.

How ſhould not they be Kings in the other life, ſeeing they are ſo in this, and St. *Peter* calls them, even in this World, Regal Prieſthood, *Regale Sacerdotium?* How ſhould they not be ſo, ſeeing they are Coheirs, Brethren, and Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to whom his Father hath made all things ſubject, *Subjecit ei omnia*, as St. *Paul* ſaith; and they are aſſociated to his Inheritance, to his Body, and by conſequence to his Dominion?

To know its Greatneſs, we need only compare it with that of earthly Kings, and ſo conſider the difference.

What we obſerve in the Power of earthly Kings, is, That 'tis terminated by their deaths; and ſo being annexed to their lives, becomes as vain and as unſolid as Mens lives.

Likewiſe they do not poſſeſs it all the time they have the Title: For what is the Sovereignty of a King who ſleeps? And who can believe, that a King who ſhall always have been aſleep, had truly been King? They are not then Kings effectively, when they do enjoy Sovereignty, and act not like Kings. Now how much time is there in the lives of Kings, wherein they do not think of their Royalty, and act nothing but mean Functions? But even when they think thereon the moſt, and would enjoy it the moſt, their Royalty does it exempt them from the Miſeries of this life, and the infirmities of Nature? Do not trouble and vexation go about to attack, and ſeiſe them even upon the Throne? And do not they force them to forſake their Royal Imployments, to bring them down to very common Actions? There muſt be ſmall amuſements which hinder them from thinking of them, to help them to bear the weight of this Crown, which they cannot maintain; and with all theſe miſerable Comforts, there are ſome who have not ſtuck to believe, that 'tis more advantagious to free themſelves abſolutely thereof. If this reſolution

ſolution be rare, 'tis, perchance, becauſe 'tis rare for Men to follow Reaſon. For who can recount the troubles and pains that thoſe have, who appear the moſt happy, by maintaining their Authority and Power? How many ſupports and helps ſtand they in need of? How many Perſons do they depend on? So that it may very well be ſaid, Dominion is never bought but at the price of an infinity of Slavery, that there are no People more tormented and leſs at liberty than Princes. We obey *Cæſar*, ſaith *Cicero*, and *Cæſar* is obedient to time. So as we cannot know whereunto he will oblige us, he knows not himſelf what the Conjunctures of time will oblige him to. *Nos illi ſervimus, ille temporibus. Ita nec ille quid tempora poſtulatura ſint, nec nos quid ipſe poſtulet ſcire poſſumus.* Behold what this Idol of human Vanity and Ambition is, which worldly Men look upon as the ſovereign Felicity of this life.

'Tis but taking the contrary to all theſe defects and miſeries, to conceive what this divine Kingdom, which God hath prepared for his Elect, is. It is a Kingdom which is not only eternal in it ſelf, but that renders thoſe who poſſeſs it eternal. As it cannot be loſt, there needs no trouble to conſerve it. We do not enjoy it by intervals, and divers interruptions. We are never attacked by trouble, melancholy, nor by wearineſs. We are there free from all miſery, bondage, and from all cares. 'Tis a Kingdom which is never troubled with any War, becauſe there we are not attackable by any Enemy.

Laſtly, 'Tis a Kingdom poſſeſſed by an infinite of Kings, who are ſo far from diminiſhing the Grandeur and the Power one of another, that they encreaſe and augment it on the contrary, and fortify it, becauſe they have all one and the ſame Heart, one and the ſame Mind, and make all together but one King, which is Jeſus Chriſt. 'Tis to this Kingdom we are called. 'Tis this Kingdom which is promiſed us upon ſo favourable conditions, that to obtain it, 'tis ſufficient to deſire it ſincerely.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

What impreſſions Meditating of the Felicity of Heaven ought to make upon us.

AS we have hitherto only related the thoughts of the Fathers, to form the Idea of a heavenly life, we will only follow them in the reflexions they have drawn from thence.

I.

St. *Paul* lays open one which is of great concern, in repreſenting all the Labours and all the Pains which Champions endured to acquire a corruptible Crown, thereby to excite us to undergo with alacrity the labours of a Chriſtian life, to obtain an incorruptible Crown, and teaching us thereby, that the greatneſs of the good which we expect, ought to make us undervalue all the hardſhips of this life, whether we ſhould ſuffer them when they happen to us, or that we ſhould expoſe our ſelves to them when God engages us therein.

'Tis in following this overture that St. *Auſtin* makes uſe of the Example of the pains Men endure either to avoid Evils, or to acquire temporal Goods, that he may ſhew how much we ought to eſteem as nothing the ſtate of thoſe we ought to ſuffer to gain Heaven. Men, ſaith he, *De verb. Domi. ſecundum Mat. Ser.* 11. *Suffer the Iron and the Fire to be made uſe of to deliver them by a more ſhort Grief, but more violent, from thoſe pains of an Ulcer, which though longer, would not have laſted continually. A Soldier uſeth his Body to hardſhips of War, thereby to procure himſelf reſt, which he enjoys much leſs time than he hath paſſed in the fatigues and miſeries of this Profeſſion. What ſhall I ſay of thoſe who trade by the Sea? To what dangers are they expoſed to gain Riches, which are nothing but vain and periſhable, which we cannot conſume without more dangers than we ought to undergo to acquire them? Why ſhould not Charity do to obtain Beatitude what Covetouſneſs*

touſneſs doth to gain worldly Goods, which are nothing but real miſery?

He makes uſe of this ſame Reaſon after a more lively manner, in his Letter to *Armantarius* and *Paulinus*.

We expoſe our ſelves, ſaith he, to ſo many perils and dangers, to ſo many labours, and to ſo many loſſes, to prolong or to render this life more agreeable, which muſt neceſſarily end one day, although we cannot be exempt from death, but only put it back for ſome time. By how much more reaſon are we obliged to ſuffer all theſe pains to acquire everlaſting life, where Nature is not obliged to fly death with ſo much Care, nor Faint-heartedneſs to fear it with ſo much Infamy, nor Sagacity to ſupport it with Courage? For death then will be no more dreadful, ſeeing then there will be no more death. How then would you not be of the number of thoſe chaſte lovers of this eternal and moſt bleſſed life, being you ſee that this tranſitory life, miſerable as it is, hath paſſionate lovers?

At what coſt and labours do Men endeavour to prolong their labours? And by how many frights to fly death, to the end they may be able to fear it for a longer time?

What Griefs do not the Iron and the Fire make them ſuffer, who put themſelves into the hands of Phyſitians to be cured? 'Tis not yet that they may not die, but that they may prolong it ſome little time. The Torments they ſuffer are certain, the Hopes of prolonging their days uncertain, and the violence of the Grief often brings thoſe to death, who have only expoſed themſelves thereto through the meer fear of death. Thus having rather choſen to ſuffer death to avoid Pain and Grief, it happens that they ſuffer at once both Grief and Death; not only becauſe they find ſometimes Death in Grief it ſelf, to which they have had recourſe to avoid Death; but alſo becauſe having ſuffered ſo much to be healed, they are at laſt conſtrained to abandon Life, which though recovered by a thouſand Torments, cannot always laſt, it being always mortal, nor endure any long time, it being ſo ſhort, nor likewiſe in this ſhort abode have a continuance which can be certain, it being always uncertain.

II.

This ſame Conſideration may be applied to a thouſand Objects which every day preſent themſelves in

in the World, and which are able to convince us, that we do not do to obtain eternal life, what worldly People do to gain a Fortune, or to ſatisfie their Paſſions.

For Example, When we ſee thoſe who would raiſe and put themſelves forward into the World, ſo vigilant in managing all that may be for their purpoſe, ſo circumſpect in avoiding all that may be prejudicial to them, ſo patient in ſuffering Rebukes from thoſe to whom they make their Count, ſo complying to adapt themſelves to their Humours, ſo laborious to proſper in their Deſigns, ſo ill managers of their Health when employed in their Concerns, ſo full of Paſſion which poſſeſſeth them, and thinking continually of the means to proſper therein; Have we not reaſon to rebuke our ſelves of the negligence with which we ſeek eternal life, and to cry out with St. *Bernard*, *What Shame and Confuſion for us? They have more zeal for their Misfortune, than we have our Good; they run with more violence and promptneſs to death, than we to life.* *St.* Bern. Ser. de Temp. 53.

When we ſee the Evils Men undergo to ſatisfie ſome criminal Paſſions, a Man's labour poſſeſſed with the Paſſion for Wealth, his Care, his Vigilancy, his Unquietneſs, his Watching, his renouncing of all ſorts of Pleaſures, the Dangers and the Fatigues wherein ſmoaky Honour engages Men, ought we not to ſay to our ſelves, That if Men take ſo much pains to damn themſelves in this World, is't not very reaſonable they take ſome pains to ſave themſelves? And 'tis a great ſhame that a baſe timerouſneſs of ſome, much leſs and very wholeſome troubles, ſhould make us fly from the way of God, at the ſame time that in the way of this World we muſt ſuffer ſome much more hard, which will ſtead us nothing. *Cum in itinere Dei faciliora & utilia ignava formidine fugiuntur in itinere ſæculari, duriora & ſterilia erumnoſo labore tolerantur.*

In fine, May not we ſay to our ſelves, ſeeing the difficulties there are in the World to proſper in the leaſt Enterpriſes, to procure our ſelves any Eſtabliſhment, to warrant the Friendſhip of the great ones of this World, what St. *Auſtin* reports of a worldly Man;

Confeſſ.

(*Confeſſ. l.* 8. *c.* 6.) "Who ſaid to one of his Friends, "having read the Life of St. *Anthony*, Tell me, I pray "you, what do we pretend to arrive at by all our la- "bours? What is it we aim at? And what is it we have "in proſpect in all our pretences? Can we extend our "hopes further in the life we lead at Court, than to "have the Emperour's Ear? And when we are come to "that, How brittle, and inconſtant, and perillous is "it? And how many dangers muſt we run, to arrive "at a ſtate yet more dangerous? For how long time "ſhall we live in this manner? 'Tis but deſiring hear- "tily to be a Friend of Gods, and preſently I ſhall be- "come what I would be. He ſaid it, and immediately "he was ſo, having at the ſame inſtant quitted all "worldly pretences, to give himſelf wholly to God. "Why does not this great Object of an everlaſting life, "and the meanneſs of all worldly things we deſire, "make the ſame impreſſion upon us? And wherefore, "at leaſt, do we not reproach our ſelves without inter- "miſſion, for our cowardiſe and baſeneſs?

III.

St. *Auſtin* does not only make uſe of this Conſidera- tion to animate Chriſtians, to ſuffer with courage all the Evils of this life, but alſo to encourage them to humble themſelves in the good Actions they muſt pra- ctiſe to acquire eternal life, by ſhewing them that they do no more to gain Heaven, than the *Pagans* did for their Country.

"What is there more glorious, ſaith he, *de Civit. "Dei, l.* 5. *c.* 8. than to diſdain all the Charms of this "preſent life, for that celeſtial and eternal Country; "ſeeing that a *Roman* was able to ſet a reſolution to "put his Children to death for an earthly and tempo- "ral one? If the deſire of procuring liberty for Per- "ſons who ought to die, has been able to arm a Father "againſt his own Children, what wonder if for a true "liberty, which makes us free from Sin, from Death, "and from the Devil, we do not put our Children to "death, but place the Poor of *Jeſus Chriſt* in the num- "ber of our Children? "If

" If another *Roman* having delivered his Country " from the fury of its Enemies, although it had ſo ill " acknowledged this Service, as to baniſh him for fol- " lowing the Paſſion of his envious Foes, did neverthe- " leſs ſave it out of the Hands of the *Gauls*; Why " ſhould a Chriſtian boaſt of himſelf, as having done a " great thing, becauſe, perhaps, having received in the " Church ſome barbarous and infamous injury from his " Enemies, he is not for all that numbred amongſt the " Hereticks?

" What though there have been found, who have " put their Hands into a burning Fire, thereby to af- " fright an Enemy King? Who will believe he hath " done any thing which merits the Kingdom of Heaven, " when to obtain it he hath abandoned, I do not ſay his " Hand, but his whole Body, to the Flames of his Per- " ſecutors?

" What if ſome have offered themſelves to death, to " appeaſe the Gods by their Blood? Let not the Mar- " tyrs be proud, if through the heat of their Faith and " Charity they have reſiſted even to the effuſion of their " Blood, for this Country where true and immortal Fe- " licity is found; and have not only loved their Bre- " thren for whom they have ſhed it, but alſo their " Enemies who ſhed it.

This holy Doctor urgeth theſe kind of Reflexions yet further; but theſe are ſufficient to ſhew, that if eternal life were in our thoughts, we ſhould ſee nothing almoſt in the World which would not help to animate and humble us: For what is more juſt than to work to obtain Heaven, what worldly Men do for ſecular things? And what is there more baſe and unworthy, than to be negligent in doing what will make us eternally happy, which is no more than what worldly Men do daily for frivolous and baſe Ends?

IV.

Another Reflexion very natural, and of a very great extent, which the conſideration of eternal Happineſs which we expect ought to produce in us, is, That ſeeing

ing this Happineſs is in effect our ſovereign Good and laſt End, it ought to keep that rank and place in our Hearts. Now the property, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in *Ep.* 56. of ſovereign Good is, That we relate all things thereunto: *Summum bonum id dicitur quo cuncta referuntur.*

Let eternal life then be not only our End by words; but let it be ſo really and truly. Let it be the principal Object of our Minds, the principal End of our Actions. Let it be the principal and the moſt active Cauſe of our Paſſions; and let this Character be obſerved in our life, That we prefer nothing before our Salvation; that we aim at Heaven, and that we ſigh after other things than terreſtrial ones.

V.

But becauſe we cannot accompliſh theſe Obligations, unleſs we love an eternal life; nor love it, unleſs we think of it; we ought therefore to make uſe of holy Inventions, which may renew the Idea thereof, and engrave it deeper in our Hearts, and follow the Conſiderations which the holy Fathers have given us. The Spirit of God which animated them, hath made their Piety to conſiſt in raiſing them to the thought, and to the deſire of an eternal life, through all the States and Conditions, and all the Rencounters of this life.

If they have been in Proſperity, and in the poſſeſſion of any temporal Goods, they have looked upon them as the Comforts of miſerable and condemned Perſons, and not as recompences to make us happy. *Hæc omnia miſerorum ſunt damnatorumque ſolatia, non præmia beatorum.* Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. 22. c. 24.

They have been careful not to conſider theſe Goods, but as refreſhments which are granted us from God in the courſe of our Voyage, and not as thoſe whereunto we hope to arrive at the end of our Voyage. *God*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, *in* Pſ. 34. *comforts us in our way, provided that we comprehend we are in the way, and that all this life, and all things we make uſe of therein, ought only to be to us as a retreat for Travellers, and not as a Houſe where we would*

dwell. Tota iſta vita, & omnia quibus uteris in hac vita, ſic tibi debent eſſe tanquam ſtabulum viatori, non tanquam Domus habitatori.

If they have wiſhed temporal Goods for themſelves or for others, they have had a care not to eſteem them, but in ſuch a manner which had relation to a heavenly life. *Let our Lord God*, ſaith *St.* Auſtin, *receive us into his Arms, to comfort us by the Goods of the Earth, and render us happy by the poſſeſſion of eternal Goods. Dominus nos ſuſcipiat conſolandos Temporalibus, Beatificandos æternis.* Even in the uſe they have made of them, they have always had other Goods in proſpect, and have endeavoured to make theſe human Conſolations ſerve to ſtir themſelves up to deſire them. *What ſhall the heavenly Goods be*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, de Civit. Dei. l. 22. 24. *ſeeing we find ſo much Pleaſure in terreſtrial ones? Quid igitur illa ſunt, ſi tot, ac talia, ac tanta, ſunt iſta? Let theſe things*, ſaith he elſewhere, *in* Pſal. 84. *which we love in this World, be a means to make us love God more, being he ſurpaſſes them ſo much in beauty and grandeur.*

VI.

If they have ſeen theſe Goods of the World in the hands of wicked Men, inſtead of taking occaſion to bear them ſpite, they have been careful only to fortifie themſelves in the love and the eſteem of eternal Goods.

What will he give, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, De Civit. l. 22. c. 24. *to thoſe whom he has predeſtinated to life, ſeeing he gives ſo much to thoſe whom he has predeſtinated to death? Quid dabit eis quos prædeſtinavit ad vitam, qui hæc dedit etiam eis, quos prædeſtinavit ad mortem?* And they are ſo far from eſteeming wicked Men more, becauſe they poſſeſs terreſtrial Goods, that they have taken occaſion to deſpiſe thoſe Goods, as being poſſeſſible by the Wicked.

Thoſe Goods, ſaith he, *in* Pſal. 62. *which God has given to the impious, are ſo vain, that they deſerve very well to be poſſeſſed by them. Do not then look upon them as eſtimable, becauſe you ſee the impious may have them. Quæ donat & malis tam frivola ſunt, & hæc & malis donari digna ſunt; ne*

ne tibi quaſi magna videantur quæ poſſunt donari & malis. If God did regard, ſaith he in another place, in *Pſ.* 73. *theſe terreſtrial Goods as ſome thing of great value, he would not grant them to the wicked; but he gives them to the wicked, that the good may learn to beg what's good of him, which he gives not to the wicked.*

VII.

'Tis thus that human Conſolations do not hinder them from making *Jeruſalem* the principal Object of their Joy and Deſires, as the Prophet ſaith; *Si non propoſuero Jeruſalem in principio lætitiæ meæ.*

But they have found in the afflictions and the evils of this life yet more means to inflame themſelves with a deſire of eternal life.

They have conſidered theſe afflictions and theſe croſſes, which Men experience in the things they poſſeſs moſt lawfully, as advertiſements God gives them to love nothing but Heaven, and not to conſider as their Houſes the tranſitory retreats where they reſt as they paſs by. *Docetur amare meliora per amaritudinem inferiorum, ne viator tendens ad patriam ſtabulum habeat pro Domo ſua.*

They have acknowledged that it was God's Mercy to ſow theſe bitterneſſes and diſguſts amongſt the ſweets of worldly Things, to hinder thereby Chriſtians from cleaving thereunto, and to incline them to ſeek with more eagerneſs this other life, whoſe ſweets are Holy and wholeſome; *Ideo autem huic vitæ male dulci, miſcet amaritudines & tribulationes, ut alia, quæ ſalubriter dulcis eſt requiratur.* Aug. in Pſ. 43.

They have believed that 'twas a great good, that God in regard of them ſhould rob the World of what it had that was deceitful, to the end their love, which might have ſwayed them thereto, ſhould convert them entirely to this repoſe, which is neither of this World, nor of this Life. *Aug. in Pſ.* 82.

They have made uſe of this to acknowledge the miſery of this preſent life, Man's feebleneſs, and the inſtability of worldly Things, the blindneſs of thoſe who cleave thereunto; and they have endeavoured by this

means to excite in them the deſire of this Kingdom, whoſe leaſt Good is to be exempt from all theſe Evils. *Aug. in Pſ.* 32.

They have endeavoured to perſwade Men to deſire for the other life, all they deſire in this preſent, becauſe they know all Goods are found there very excellent, and the ſovereign Good which is enjoyed there, compriſes all. *If you love Riches*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in Epiſt. 54. *lay them up where they cannot periſh. If you love Honour, ſeek only that which cannot be had without deſerving it. If you love Salvation, ſtrive to get it in ſuch a manner, that you may apprehend loſing it. Laſtly, If you love Life, become worthy of ſuch an one which may never be terminated by Death.* In fine, They have made uſe of heavenly Felicity, to contemn all the Evils and all the Goods of this preſent life. Which made St. *Bernard ſay*, De Aſſ. Dom. Serm. 4. n. 7. *Happy is he who meditates always in the preſence of our Lord, and who conſiders continually the happineſs which he ſhall enjoy! What is there that can appear hard to him, who is continually employed with the thoughts that theſe Evils in this life have no proportion with the Glory we hope for? And what can he deſire in this corrupted World, whoſe Eye contemplates always the Goods of our Lord in the Land of the living?*

VIII.

It may alſo be ſaid of the knowledge of the Felicity of the Elect, as we have already ſaid of the knowledge of the miſery of the Wicked, that it ought to ſerve as a Rule to all the Judgments which we make of the happineſs or the miſery of this World, as well as of its greatneſs and meanneſs. To be great and happy, is to have a right to the Kingdom of God, to be in the way that leads hither, to poſſeſs the Goods of Grace, which are the Seed, the firſt Fruits, and the Pledge thereof. To be Poor, Miſerable, and reduced to the laſt Extremity, is to be robbed of our Right, and to deſerve Hell.

All the differences which ariſe from human Conditions and Qualities, are nothing in compariſon of thoſe.

Alſo

Alſo Jeſus Chriſt, to imprint in us this Truth, would needs begin with this that marvellous Sermon of the Mountain, which contains all the Maxims of his Goſpel, *Beati Pauperes Spiritu*, ſaith he, *quoniam ipſorum eſt Regnum Cœlorum.* That is to ſay, 'tis that Right to this eternal Kingdom which renders them Bleſſed, and that 'tis the loſs of this right which renders them Miſerable.

Finally, There needs but little Judgment to conclude from this great Idea, that Religion gives us of the Felicity of the other life, it being clear, that 'tis the thing we ought to level all our Actions at, and by the ſight of which we ought to guide all our Lives, that we ought to have an extream care to be well inſtructed in the way which leads thither, and not to be deceived in ſo important a Matter; foraſmuch as we are adviſed on the one ſide, that 'tis a very eaſie thing to go aſtray in this way, and on the other, that whoſoever goes aſtray engages himſelf in the way which leads to Hell, becauſe all that tends not to eternal life, tends to eternal death, as St. *Francis Sales* ſaith.

CHAP. XV.

The Concluſion.

A Great Wit of the latter Ages, conſidering on one ſide the certainty of Chriſtian Religion, and on the other the Lives of thoſe who make profeſſion thereof, expreſſeth the aſtoniſhment wherein he was to ſee ſo little relation thereunto, in theſe Terms: *'Tis a great Folly not to believe the Goſpel, whoſe Truth is atteſted by the Blood of ſo many Martyrs, publiſhed openly by the Words of the Apoſtles, confirmed by the Teſtimony of the Elements, and confeſſed by the Devils themſelves: But 'tis yet a much greater one, not to doubt at all of the Truth of the Goſpel, and to live as if there were no doubt of its Falſhood. Magna*

inſania eſt Evangelio non credere, cujus veritatem Sanguis Martyrum clamat, Apoſtolicæ reſonant voces, Elementa loquuntur, Dæmones confitentur: Sed longe major inſania eſt, cum de veritate Evangelii non dubites, ſic vivere quaſi de ejus falſitate non dubitares. Pic. de Mirand.

Now what this Author ſays in general of Chriſtian Religion, and of the Lives of Chriſtians, is particularly ſenſible in reſpect of the Points whereof we have treated in this Writing; that is to ſay, of Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.

To make any queſtion thereof, is a great Folly; ſeeing they are eſtabliſhed upon the Authority of the Goſpel, and this upon ſo many Miracles, and the viſible accompliſhment of ſo many wonderful Propheſies.

Jeſus Chriſt, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in *Pſ.* 73. *hath executed fully all he had promiſed. Shall we believe that he would have deceived us in what he has told us concerning his Judgment? An vero exhibuit nobis omnia quæ promiſit, & de ſolo die Judicii nos fefellit? All that hath been written*, ſaith he yet, *in* Pſal. 144. *has been accompliſhed in courſe of time; and after that, Can we doubt he ſhould not alſo accompliſh the reſt? Per omnes generationes reddidit quæ ſcripta ſunt, & quod reſtat non ei credetur?*

There is no means that the Spirit can maintain it ſelf in ſo unreaſonable a pretenſion. We muſt believe, in ſpite of us, that there will be a Heaven and a Hell; that there will be an everlaſting Fire, and a Glory which the Eyes have not ſeen, nor the Ears heard. No Man can withſtand theſe Truths. VVe embrace them, and we make a profeſſion of believing them. But what is't this Faith produceth? And what Conſequences hath it in the Conduct of Chriſtians lives?

'Tis herein that this exceſs of Folly appears much greater than the defect of Faith. VVe believe a Hell and a Heaven, and we live as if we were certain there were neither. VVe walk with the ſame ſecurity, the ſame joy, and the ſame quiet in the way to Hell, as if we had a clear conviction, that all that's ſaid were only a Story; and we loſe the Kingdom of Heaven with as much

much indifference, as if we believed it only to be an Illuſion.

VVe likewiſe advance Extravagancy, even to make it paſs for a ſign of ſtrength of Mind or VVit, never to think either of the one or the other, and to go brutiſhly to death, without ever ſo much as reflecting what muſt follow. VVe are troubled to ſuffer our ſelves to be ſpoken unto thereof; and thoſe are oftentimes the Diſcourſes the leaſt hearkned to which aim at placing theſe Objects before our Eyes. *We know well*, ſaith one, *all that is ſaid thereof; but if you know it, Why do not you do what this knowledge obliges you to do, without renouncing Reaſon?*

'Tis an eaſie thing to acknowledge the exceſs of Folly in the life of this VVorld; and which is ſtrange is, that it may be obſerved even in ſome perſons of Piety: For, in truth, there wants a great deal always to make theſe great Objects cauſe that Impreſſion upon them which they ſhould, and to make them live like People whoſe Voyage may be terminated at every moment by Heaven or Hell. It would be very eaſie to ſhew this in the moſt part of faults and weakneſſes of pious Men; but it will be ſufficient to conclude here generally, in reſpect of all the VVorld, That the moſt evident, the moſt ſenſible, and the moſt convincing of all Truths, being that we ought not to live in ſuch a ſort as may bring us to the heighth of all Miſeries, and deprive us of the ſovereign Good; every Man, who has never ſo little Senſe, ought to regulate his life ſo, as that he may have cauſe to believe he is marching towards Heaven, and not towards Hell; and that whoſoever does not ſo, ought without intermitting rebuke himſelf: That he ought to judge himſelf not only miſerable, but out of his wits: That he ought to ſigh for his ſo miſerable and unfortunate Condition, and acknowledge that all the VVorld doth place it before his Eyes, to aſſiſt him to get out thereof. In a word, To be truly reaſonable, is to labour ſeriouſly, and only for Salvation. 'Tis yet to have ſome remain of Reaſon and Underſtand-

ing; when we do it not at leaſt to condemn our ſelves, and to deſire an amendment of life: But 'tis an aboliſhing abſolutely of Reaſon to live in repoſe, without being concerned for what ſhall happen in the next World.

THE

THE SECOND TREATISE, OF Chriſtian Vigilance;

Containing

Divers means to keep our ſelves in the preſence of GOD.

CHAP. I.

Wherein Chriſtian Vigilance conſiſts.

THE Authority of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who recommends Vigilance ſo often to us, who employs, to incline us thereunto, Motives as preſſing as the terrour of death, and who has been pleaſed to ſignifie that he commanded it expreſly to all, *Marc.* 13. 37. *Omnibus dico vigilate*, is ſufficient to ſhew that there is no Duty belonging to a Chriſtian life, which is more indiſpenſable.

He does not only command it to all Chriſtians, but he commands it them at all times, joyning it to the exerciſe of Prayer, which ought to be continual; *Luc.* 21. 36. *Watch*, ſaith he, *and pray continually*; *Vigilate omni tempore orantes.* For theſe are two Duties which cannot be ſeparated. We muſt watch, that we may pray; and we cannot pray, but in proportion as we

we watch. They are as it were reciprocally in place of both Means and End one to the other: For, if it be neceſſary to watch that we may pray, we muſt pray that we may watch. VVe are diſpoſed for Prayer by Vigilance. VVe obtain Vigilance by Prayer. And laſtly, They include, as it were, each other in ſome ſort, ſeeing that as he who prays, watcheth; it is alſo true in ſome ſort, that whoſoever watcheth, prayeth.

The neceſſity of Vigilance being then thus eſtabliſhed, there is nothing in queſtion but to know the means how to practiſe it; and for that, 'tis neceſſary to know in what Vigilance conſiſts.

VVatching is oppoſite to Sleeping, as well in Grace as in Nature. Now, *thoſe who ſleep*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſleep in the night*; *Qui dormiunt nocte dormiunt*. If they ſhould ſleep in the day time, they would make Night of Day, becauſe this Sleep would deprive them of the ſight of the Light.

To be aſleep, according to the Spirit, is then to be deprived of the true Light, and to have the ſpiritual Senſes benumbed. But as in the ſame time thoſe who ſleep according to the Body are deprived of the Light, and of the thoughts of real Objects, they have yet certain obſcure ones, and apply themſelves to the falſe Repreſentation wherewith their Imaginations are filled, taking them for true and real, not thinking, whilſt they ſleep, that there can be any other Objects more real and more ſolid. Likewiſe thoſe who are aſleep according to the Spirit, being deprived of the ſight of Objects which may truly be called real, do for all that pleaſe themſelves with temporal Things, which have much leſs reality in compariſon of ſpiritual Objects, than the vain and falſe Repreſentations, which compoſe our Dreams, have in compariſon of the outward Objects they repreſent to us.

By this 'tis clear, That to watch is to have the Eyes of the Spirit open to ſpiritual Light, which diſcovers to us the Objects of the other Life, that is to ſay, God, Hell, Heaven, and Eternity, the uſe we ought to make of Creatures to be ſaved, the uſe the Devil makes of them

them to damn us, the ends God hath in giving us them, the deſigns of the Devil in repreſenting them to us, the obligations they put us in of praiſing, thanking, and praying to God.

Now as thoſe who watch have not the Eyes only open to diſcover the Objects which are repreſented, but alſo the Ears to hear what can be ſaid to them; watching, according to the Spirit, is alſo to have the Ears of the Heart attentive to the Voice of God, to hear all he ſays to us by himſelf, by his Creatures, and by all Objects, as well Spiritual as Temporal, which our Capacity is able to conceive. For God ſpeaks to us by all things, and there is nothing but our deafneſs which hinders us from hearing. This is the Idea we ought to have of Chriſtian Vigilance. Let us now proceed to the Practice and the Profit of it, in the ſequel of this Treatiſe.

CHAP. II.

How profitable it is to have often in our Minds the remembrance of God. Fundamental Reaſons about the uſefulneſs of this Practice.

SPiritual Light, which, as we have ſaid, diſtinguiſheth thoſe who watch from thoſe who do not, being nothing elſe but God himſelf, as St. *Auſtin* ſaith very often after the Scripture; all thoſe who follow it have in ſome ſort God preſent, and practiſe ſo what God ordered to *Abraham*, in theſe words, *Ambula coram me, & eſto perfectus.*

But beſides this preſence of God more general, and which is included in all the Proſpects and all the Knowledges which God's Light gives us, there is one more particular and expreſs, by which the Spirit knows God more diſtinctly, looks upon him as God, endeavours to render him Homage, Adoration, and the Worſhip which is due to him. This preſence of God is only that continual

tinual remembrance of God which the holy Fathers, who have given Rules of Chriſtian Life, recommend unto us as the only means to live in Piety. *We muſt*, ſaith St. *Baſil*, *watch for the guard of our Heart with all ſort of diligence, and not ſuffer the remembrance of God, which ought to be continually in us, to be blotted out of our Minds. We muſt always have the Idea of God imprinted as an indelible Character in our Souls. 'Tis by this means that we obtain ordinarily that Charity which will excite us to obſerve the Commandments, and which is conſerved by obſerving them.* S. Baſil. Reg. fuſ. diſp. int. 5. *See* Reg. Brevior. 21, 29, & 306.

St. *Gregory* of *Nazianze* (*Orat.* 33. *p.* 531.) does not ſpeak leſs vigorouſly of the uſefulneſs of this Practice: *It ought to be to us*, ſaith he, *as frequent a thing to be mindful of God, as to breathe: Or rather, it ought to be our only Occupation. 'Tis our duty to think of God day and night, morning, and evening, and at midday; to bleſs and praiſe him at all times, going to bed and riſing, walking, and in all other Actions; thereby to purifie our Souls by this continual remembrance.*

All the other Fathers ſpeak the ſame Language; and there is no Counſel hath been propoſed with more uniformity among all thoſe who have given Rules of a ſpiritual Life.

But to comprehend even from the beginning the importance and neceſſity of this holy Practice, we muſt conſider, that the firſt and moſt general of all the Temptations is that of forgetting God, becauſe it ſprings from all the Objects of Senſe, how innocent ſoever they may be.

For the ſtate wherein we live in this Life, is that theſe Objects ſtriking upon the Organs of the Body, force the Soul to apply her ſelf to them, without being able to defend her ſelf from them. They advertiſe themſelves of their preſence, and they have no need at all to be known, to be aided with an interiour Reflexion which may excite the Idea of them: And as their Impreſſions are lively and continual, they ſway the Soul to fill her ſelf with them, and to forget every thing elſe.

But

But as by a publick and known inſtitution, or by a natural relation, ſome of theſe Objects, beſides the Idea of their Being which they form in the Mind, are yet Tokens of divers motions of the Love which we can eaſily conceive in others, becauſe we feel them often in our ſelves: It happens from thence, for Example, that by receiving the impreſſion which the outward Man may make upon us, we conceive moreover the Idea of their Thoughts, whether it be by their words, by the alteration of the countenances, or by other ſigns of inſtitution. And ſo although thoſe Thoughts may be Spiritual, they agree nevertheleſs in that of corporal Beings, that by the favour of ſome ſigns to which they are annexed, they enter into the Soul whether we will or no, and they procure her application.

Beſides theſe outward Principles, which withdraw in ſome ſort the Soul out of her ſelf, ſhe is yet violently carried thereunto by the diſorder of her Paſſions, by the propenſity ſhe hath to Pleaſures, and for all that flatters her Ambition and Pride; by the indigency wherein ſhe finds her ſelf within her ſelf, which ſhe endeavours to repleniſh by outward means. Thus ſhe is carried thereunto with vehemency, ſhe follows with greedineſs the impreſſions ſhe receives from corporal Things, ſhe plunges her ſelf thereinto headlong, and ſhe gives them by her imagination a greatneſs and a ſolidity, which of themſelves they have not.

'Tis quite contrary with ſpiritual Things. What greatneſs and what reality ſoever they may have, they do not act at all by themſelves upon our Senſes, nor admoniſh in this manner the Soul to think thereof. And though by the means of certain ſigns, the Soul may be ſometimes warned thereof, nevertheleſs as we conceive them imperfectly, ſo the Ideas we have of them are very weak, and the impreſſions of worldly Things do continually attract the Soul; it follows from hence that almoſt all Men do live in the oblivion of God, and that even thoſe who deſire to be his, ſtand in need of a continual ſtrength to uphold themſelves from falling thereinto, and to withſtand the impreſſion of ſenſible things,

things, which tend to apply the Soul to outward things, and to diſſwade her from ſpiritual Objects.

Thus howſoever we may be perſwaded, ſpeculatively, of the truth, reality, and the grandeur of the ſpiritual World, nevertheleſs we feel in our ſelves a weight and an inclination which ſways and over-rules us from conceiving any other grandeur, and almoſt any other Being than that of thoſe Objects which ſtrike our Senſes. And what appears more ſtrange, is, that even when we are overpowered and become inclined to buſie our ſelves with temporal Things by Gods order, by the motive of his Grace, and the obedience which we owe him, and that we relate, firſt, to his Honour and Glory, the application which is given to theſe Objects, the inclination which we have thereunto, blots out by little and little this firſt intention, and makes us cleave thereunto through a pleaſure we take therein, in ſuch a manner that theſe outward Employs, though undertaken by God's order, diſſwade us inſenſibly from him, and fills us with Creatures; unleſs we uſe great endeavours to ſtop this impreſſion.

Behold the principal temptations of this life, and the ſource of all the others, or rather 'tis a temptation which is univerſal, which is included in all particular temptations.

'Tis very viſible by what has been ſaid, that the moſt natural remedy againſt this general temptation, ſhould be to render ſpiritual Things more preſent than they are; and to conceive them in a manner which might make us comprehend their greatneſs better; to renew continually the thought of them in our Minds, and thereby to ſtifle that ſo violent impreſſion which corporal and tranſitory Things make therein. But as theſe ſpiritual Objects do not preſent themſelves of themſelves, and that the connexion they have with corporal Things is not ſenſible, the Soul muſt be ſupplied thereby, by all poſſible means ſhe can find out.

Theſe means are reduced to two, a general and a particular one. The firſt is, To force and compel the Mind by a ſtrong and lively Will to apply it ſelf to God,

God, and to withdraw it ſelf, as it were, by force from the ſight of Creatures, to fix it to that of ſpiritual Objects.

The ſecond is, To act in ſuch a ſort by a holy Induſtry, that all the Objects which environ us, and which ſtrike our Senſes, may renew therein the Idea of God, and make us remember what he is, and what we owe him.

To be prevalent in this laſt means, which involves the practices of the firſt, we muſt indeavour to imprint lively in our Minds the diverſe relations that outward Objects have with God, and to enchain theſe Ideas together, that the things of this World may never preſent themſelves to us, without ſtirring up thoſe of God in us.

There is no need to bring this about of inventing arbitrary contracts. There is no more but to ſee what it is; that is to ſay, but to conceive that God repleniſheth, upholds, moves, and guides the viſible World; that he ſpeaks to us by all Creatures; that he is the only and inviolable Rule of our Actions; and that 'tis he alone can defend us from the temptations which theſe cauſe in us, and bring upon us; and accuſtom us thus to ſee Creatures no more, without ſeeing at the ſame in them and by them, that to which they have ſo intimate and ſo eſſential a relation.

CHAP. III.

The firſt manner how to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, drawn from the dependence of the being of Creatures on God.

THE qualities of Creatures may be different, and ſo have diverſe relations with God; but as they all agree in the Being, they have all by this Being which they have received, and do receive continually from God, an

an intimate connexion with him, through the dependence they have thereon.

Thus every Creature by its Being ought to put us in mind of God, and is a natural ſign thereof. But to imprint this Truth more lively in our Minds, it is good to conſider, that all Bodies which ſtrike our Senſes, which appear to have ſo much Splendour and Beauty, which we take almoſt for real Beings which are in the World, there being only theſe Beings which advertiſe that they are there, do nevertheleſs participate of being but in a very imperfect manner. They have not in them the cauſe of their ſubſiſtence. If the Almighty hand which hath created them, did not maintain them, and draw them continually from their nothingneſs, they would fall again into nothing at every turn, only becauſe he would ceaſe to give them their Being. And this ſame Being which they receive is ſo limited in every thing, that it relies much more of its nothing than of its Being, ſince we perceive therein an infinite want of all perfections which they have not. Being moreover deſtitute of intelligence, they are, in reſpect of themſelves, as if they were not; and if they are for us, they are not for themſelves.

If from Bodies we paſs to created Spirits, we ſhall find there the ſame deficiency of ſubſiſting by themſelves, and the ſame neceſſity of receiving continually a Being from the hand of God. 'Tis true, they have not the defect of not knowing themſelves, and their knowledge doth extend it ſelf to ſome Objects; but the boundaries are ſo ſtrait, that what they know is almoſt nothing in compariſon of what they know not.

The imperfection of the Being of Creatures, ought to ſerve us as a ſtep to conceive, beſides theſe material Beings, and theſe limited Spirits, that there is an immaterial Being unlimited, which is the Source of every Being and every Knowledge; which depends upon nothing, and whereupon all depends; which is immenſe, infinite, neceſſary, and all-powerful; which is great without quantity, good without quality, eternal without viciſſitude of time; which produceth all alterations without

without changing; which is always acting, yet always in quiet; which is every where, without being included in any thing; which is more intimate with us than we our selves, and which gives us without intermission, as St. *Paul* saith, Life, Motion, and Being.

This infinite Being is the God we adore. All Creatures point him out to us, seeing they come from him, and receive from him all they have. But as we are swayed by the weight of our Corruption to insist upon the Effects, without considering of the all-powerful Cause which produceth them, and to fill our Heads with the vain splendour of Creatures, forgetting the sovereign Beauty from whence they borrow that little which they have; to withstand this miserable blindness, we ought to tell all Creatures which environ us, all that's Beautiful and Charming in the World; thou art not my God, 'tis not from thee we have our Being, and that thou hast nothing but what is given thee by God, who is hidden in thee, and whom we do not see.

We ought to consider often God as an infinite Sea, which conserves all things; and our selves as Fishes, or rather as Atoms which are engulfed therein, and whose Being disappears, in some sort, in the immensity of this sovereign Being which swallows them.

If we were well accustomed to these thoughts, Creatures would be so far from making us unmindful of God, that they would place him continually before our Eyes. We should adore him without intermission by secret looks and motions. We should annihilate our selves in his presence, at the sight of his greatness and of our littleness. We should make use of all sensible Objects to renew to him our homages. As he is every where, we should find him every where, in Heaven, on Earth, and in Hell it self: *Si ascendero in Cœlum, ut illic est, & si descendero in infernum, ades,* in *Psal.* 130. The whole Universe would represent to us the Magnificence of his Glory, and it would be a Temple for us, which would excite us to make us observe the respect due to the Greatness of him for whom it is Consecrated. We should never imagin we are alone, when we should see

our ſelves always in the preſence of God, and all our Actions, and all our Thoughts, and all our Motions expoſed to his divine Eyes. Laſtly, We ſhould, at leaſt, endeavour to intimate the Modeſty, the Reſervedneſs, the Reſpect, and the Attention of thoſe who are in the preſence of earthly Kings, and not dare to do, in the preſence of God, any thing that may draw upon us his Wrath, as we ſee no body who would willingly do in the preſence of Kings, what he knew diſagreeable to them, and for which he might preſently be puniſhed.

There is nothing ſo common as theſe thoughts, but there is nothing more rare than the making a right uſe of them, and to make them ſerve to withdraw the Mind from the diſſipation which the ſight of the World may cauſe in it to hinder it from delivering it ſelf to the Objects of the Senſe, to compoſe the inward and the outward Man, and to be in a condition we would be in if God were viſibly preſent.

This happens not becauſe we ſeldom think of theſe Truths, we conceive them but weakly, and we are not lively penetrated with them. 'Tis then what we ought to beg of God, and what we ought to labour for, by continual reflections which may be able to imprint them ſtrongly in our Minds and Hearts.

CHAP. IV.

The ſecond manner how to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, which is to conſider his Providence in all things.

FAith does not only diſcover to us God in the World, maintaining all his handy-works, and giving them continually a Being, in quality of Creator: Faith makes us ſee him as King in his Kingdom, regulating and guiding even all ſmaller things with ſo abſolute an Empire, and ſo invincible a Force, that no Creature can withſtand his Orders, nor hinder it ſelf from contributing

buting whatſoever it can do, good or bad, to the execution of his Will.

This Truth giving us leave to behold all things, and all Creatures as inſtruments in the Hands of God, gives us means conſequently to raiſe our ſelves by this towards God, and to adore him as the true Author of all that happens in the World.

Goods and Evils are equally proper to renew this Idea: For God is the true Author of both.

He is the Author of the Good which we receive by the Miniſtry of the Creatures, it being he that appoints and procures them for us by an expreſs order of his Will and Pleaſure, without which the Affection and good Will of all Men together muſt neceſſarily be unuſeful to us. And he is no leſs Author of the Evils which happen, it being his Juſtice that condemns us to them, and employs either Men, or ſome ſecondary Cauſes, for the fulfilling this his Pleaſure upon us.

We ſhould then change our Language, or at leaſt our Thoughts, and in lieu of buſying the Mind about Creatures, relating all, and attributing all unto them, it would be very juſt to raiſe our ſelves upon all occaſions, to the true Cauſe of all theſe accidents, and to give to God, in our Thoughts, that part which he hath effectively in all that happens in this World.

We ſhould not then think at all that ſuch a Man is dead by ſuch or ſuch an accident; that one was taken away by a Fever, another by the Plague; but we ſhould look upon God in Mens deaths, as making uſe of theſe ſeveral means for the executing the Decree he has pronounced againſt them.

Likewiſe we ſhould never ſay that we have loſt our Wealth, through the injuſtice of another; but that God has made uſe of the malice of an Enemy, to take away from us what we deſerved to loſe.

Be very circumſpect, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, of relating your Afflictions to any but to God: For the Devil himſelf cannot do you the leaſt harm without his permiſſion who poſſeſſeth the ſovereign Power, and who makes uſe thereof either to puniſh or correct Men: To puniſh

the Impious, to correct his Children. *Prorſus*, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, in *Pſ.* 32. *ad Deum refer flagellum tuum, quia nec Diabolus tibi aliquid facit, niſi ille permittat, qui deſuper habet poteſtatem, aut ad pœnam, aut ad diſciplinam; ad pœnam impiis, ad diſciplinam filiis.*

By this means we ſhall ſee God every where, and in all things, there being nothing but what is regulated by his Providence, and what is wonderful; we ſhall ſee therein nothing in one Senſe but what's juſt, becauſe nothing happens but by the order of his Providence, which is always juſt.

Thus all Hiſtories will be to us Hiſtories of God, all Men Miniſters of God, all Events Decrees of God; in which, by conſequence, we ſhall never find any thing whereof we can juſtly complain. *Moral Eſſays f.* 1. *tr.* 2. 2. *par. n.* 16.

What Peace, what Submiſſion, what Aſſurance ought not this Truth to produce in our Minds? Ought we to fear being in a Veſſel whereof God is the Pilot? Now this is what is in the World in regard of all Men. God conducts them to the end to which they are ordained by infallible ways; and from whence none ever is diverted.

'Tis true, he inclines ſome, others he does not; becauſe he is the Author of ſome Mens ways, and others he permits to walk in the ways they have choſen of themſelves. But theſe permiſſions do not hinder us from adoring him, and ſubmitting our ſelves to his orders leſs than the effects he produceth of himſelf, and where Creatures have leſs ſhare, ſeeing that he makes uſe of them for the execution of his deſigns, and regulates and limits them in ſuch a meaſure as is neceſſary to make them ſucceed.

To the end that the conſideration of the divine Providence may produce in us this continual attention to God, whereof we are now ſpeaking, we muſt not be contented to acknowledge and adore it in the great events, but as extending it ſelf to all, and that there is not ſo ſmall a chance which is not ordained by God, we muſt accuſtom our ſelves to honour this divine Providence

vidence in all, and relate to it the ſmalleſt accidents which happen to us.

'Tis not then enough to ſay with *David*, in the great calumnies publiſh'd againſt, and the great outrages done to us, that God has commanded thoſe who dealt thus with us to uſe us ſo barbarouſly, and to calumniate us; that is to ſay, he has permitted it for our good; but we muſt ſay in the ſmall incommodities of this common life, that 'tis by the order of God that Men ſpeak harſhly and uncivilly to us, rail at us without a cauſe, that Friends neglect us, forget us, and croſs us; that we be wearied with incommodious viſits, and importuned by unjuſt and unprofitable intreaties.

We ought likewiſe to acknowledge this order of God in the leaſt good turns we receive from Creatures; the leaſt good ſucceſs which happens to us, or our Friends; in the leaſt friendſhip done us; in the leaſt accidents which ſhock or favour our deſires; and laſtly, we muſt acknowledge it in things whoſe good or evil we cannot diſcover, not forbearing to honour therein the admirableneſs of God's Judgments, which ſometimes fixeth the execution of his moſt important deſigns, to rencounters which ſeem caſual and indifferent, and in which humane Prudence can diſcover neither advantage nor diſadvantage.

By this means we ſhall conſerve our ſelves in a kind of continual praying, by ſeeing God act in all things, and adoring in all the conduct which it pleaſeth him to keep over us and all Creatures.

CHAP. V.

The third manner how to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, which is to conſider what all Creatures have from God, and above all Perſons with whom we deal.

AS God has painted himſelf in all his Works, has diſperſed the Draughts and Characters of his divine Perfections, and has done it even with a deſign that we may make uſe thereof as ſteps to raiſe us up to him, 'tis to ſecond his intentions, to obſerve in each Creature what it has from God, to acknowledge God in it, and by it to climb to the top of theſe Perfections, which is God himſelf.

I will not ſpeak here of the Image of the Divinity which might be found in Creatures deprived of Reaſon, although it might be juſt, having been ſo often employed by Scripture, to ſet forth the divers Attributes of God, we make uſe of the relation they have thereunto, to excite in us the remembrance of what they repreſent.

I ſhall content my ſelf to explicate in what ſort God may be ſeen and honoured by Men, and made uſe of to keep our ſelves in his Preſence, whereas oftentimes there is nothing diſſwades us more from it than our commerce with Men, becauſe they fill our Minds not only with the Image of their Body, but with the Ideas of their Judgments and Paſſions, which often produce the ſame in us.

All Men generally, as Men, do aſſiſt us to know God, as having engraven his Image in their Nature it ſelf, as being all capable of poſſeſſing him, and as not knowing from any one that he is not of the number of the predeſtinated, we may look upon them all before-hand as to be eternally transformed into God.

But beſides this general quality, which is common to all, we ſee and diſtinguiſh God in the divers ſtates of Mankind, by particular Characters which imprint a more lively Idea in us.

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We may easily acknowledge them by these Principles which Scripture furnisheth us with, Rom. 13. 1. *That all power comes from God.* Jo. 3. 17. *That man can have nothing but what's given him from heaven.* Jac. 2. 17. *That every excellent grace, and every perfect gift, comes from above, and descends from the Father of lights.* 1 Cor. 3. 16. *That we are the temples of the holy ghost.* Eph. 1. 11. *That the church is the body of Jesus Christ: That what is done to the members of Jesus Christ, is done to Jesus Christ himself,* Matth. 25. 40.

By the help of these divine Lights, God may be found and honoured in Kings, Princes, Magistrates, Ecclesiastical Superiors, and even in Unjust and Violent Men; because his Power may be found there, where Men may be the Instruments and the Ministers, but yet never appertains or belongs to him. And therefore *Judith* acknowledged it in *Holofernes*, in telling him, *That he had in him the power of God to chastise the wicked: Virtus Dei quæ in te est ad eruditionem insipientium.*

When Riches are seen in rich Mens Hands, it may be imagined they are the Oeconomers and the Distributers thereof, but never the Proprietors and the Masters; because the Dominion belongs always to God, who may take it from them, and give it to others when he pleaseth, by an inalienable Right of his Sovereignty. So in seeing them, the Mind ought to be elevated to him, who hath establish'd them Dispensators and Disposers of these Goods, and who will make them render an account of their Administration.

We do not only see God in the Wicked, by the share they may have in his Power, his Riches, and his other Gifts, which may be common to them with the good: Jesus Christ is also in them in many other ways. *He is in them,* as an excellent Author saith, Treatise of Piety, To. 2. Pag. 321. *to punish them in his wrath. And where is the Servant who trembles not when he sees his Master in wrath, and that he condemns to chains and even to death the wicked Servant, chiefly if he himself deserve to be rebuked, and perceive himself guilty? He is in them to accomplish his designs which we are ignorant of. And who will not*

have a regard to the ſecret orders of a Prince, when he ſees all is altered, and knows not what he will do? He is in them to try us, and to know whether or no we are faithful to him. Who will not be watchful of himſelf, and keep within the boundaries of modeſty in this time of temptation? He is in us to advance us, becauſe we ſtay too much, and becauſe their commiſſion moves us to make haſte. And who ſhall dare to complain thereof, and will not rather endeavour to recover the loſt time? He is in us to cure us. And who ought not to receieve the remedy from God with Submiſſion and Patience, without inſiſting upon the Raſor which cuts, which he muſt conſider as an inſtrument of Health, and honour the Hand that employs it? There are ſome who kiſs the Medicine which is given them, ſo well they receive it, in hopes they may have no more. He is in them, in fine, to recompenſe us; theſe are they who place the Crown upon our Heads. Ought we to be offended then, if they do it a little rudely, ſeeing that thereby they augment our recompence?

But if God may be ſeen even in the Wicked; How much more eaſily may he be ſeen in the good, and thoſe who are juſt? *He is not in them only, he acts there, he ſpeaks there. When the Members of Jeſus Chriſt are fill'd with his Spirit, he is there almoſt without any vail, and in a manner palpable, becauſe he may be ſeen as it were with Eyes, being we know that 'tis he who acts in them all the good they do:* Domine dabis pacem nobis, omnia enim opera noſtra operatus es in nobis. *Their ſweetneſs is his ſweetneſs, their patience is his. When they ſpeak he regulates the motion of their Tongues. When they burn with Charity, 'tis he kindles it. He is their Charity and their Virtue.*

Why then are we not careful to vary our motions towards God, according to the ſeveral Graces which we obſerve in the Souls of the Juſt? And laſtly, Why does not the ſight of all Chriſtians excite in us the remembrance of Jeſus Chriſt who is their Head, who hath united them to his Body, and who has made them his Brothers and Co-heirs? Are we not then very much to blame, if we ſhould forget God, being he preſents himſelf to us in ſo many faſhions, and is every where before us, at all times, and in all kind of conditions? *He*

He presents himself to us, saith the aboveſaid Author, in the great ones, to aſtoniſh us. He presents himself to us in the poor, to ſhew compaſſion. He makes uſe of the averſion of thoſe who love us not, to gain us more. He makes uſe of the occaſion of Nature, and thoſe who love us, to begin to make us love him. He ſhews himſelf in unknown perſons, and who are indifferent to us, to the end that being without paſſion in what regards them, we may ſee him more eaſily, and that nothing may make us turn away from him. He is in all his Members, he is every where, that we may ſee him every where: And every where we ſhut our Eyes, that we may not ſee him.

We ſhould then endeavour to look upon all thoſe with whom we have any commerce, by ſome of theſe Characters, to help to raiſe us to God, and to beſeech the favour from him to ſpeak to them as we ought, and to hearken with more ſweetneſs, docility, and reſpect to all they ſay to us, which would render all our converſations Holy and Edifying.

CHAP. VI.

The fourth manner of keeping our ſelves in the preſence of God, which is, to be attentive to the inſtructions he gives us as to all we ſee and hear in the World.

CHriſtian Vigilance does not only direct the Eyes of the Soul to ſpiritual Objects, it opens alſo her Ears to the inſtructions God gives us. There are ſome which are in ſome ſort heard through all the World, and they are thoſe which aim directly at us, as advertiſements which are given us by Preachers, or by thoſe who are ſo charitable as to mind us of our Duties, and to make us know our faults. And the effect of Chriſtian Vigilance, as to them, is, that it does not make us look upon them, and receive them as coming from Men, but as from God by their Miniſtry, according to this undoubted principle in St. *Auſtin*'s Divinity, That God

God is the only Master of Truth, in what manner soever he makes us know it.

But there are other Instructions which God gives us, which are more hidden and harder to be understood, which are those the Scripture speaks of, saying that Wisdom cries from without, and her voice is heard in the Streets. *Sapientia foris prædicat, & in plateis dat vocem suam, Prov.* 1. 20. These are those, say I, which are engraven in the Passions and common Actions of Men, and in all the accidents which happen to them. God speaks by all this, and he speaks very lively, very vigorously, and very efficaciously; but 'tis to none but those who sleep not, who are attentive to his voice, and who desire to hear him. He does not only speak, but speaks continually, because there is nothing in the World that happens, which may not be proper to instruct a vertuous Man, who is vigilant of himself, and has a care to relate to his edification all he sees or learns.

As for Example, What do we see in the World but Vices, or Vertus; Good, or Evil; Prosperities, Adversities; Elevations, Ruins; Passions, Wandrings? And what is there in all this whereby God speaks not to those who hearken to him?

He exposes Vertues to our sight, to encline us to imitate them, to shew us how far we are from them, and to give us hopes to obtain them. And 'tis, as if he said, Behold what we must do, but do not do it: Behold what you ought to hope. *Cur non poteris quod iste & iste?* He shews us by the rarity of these vertues that Grace is rare, that we ought to beg it with zeal and perseverance, that we fear losing it; but not despair of obtaining it.

He instructs us by vices and sins, whereof he permits us to be spectators, with the corruption and weakness of Man. He shews us what we are of our selves, and the state and condition we ought to dread falling into.

He makes us see by the Goods of this World wherewith he enriches some, the nothingness and vanity of this

this temporal Felicity, by giving us means to consider the miseries which are annexed to them, and which serve as matter to the divine Reflexions which the Holy Ghost made *Solomon* write in the Book of *Ecclesiasticks*. He discovers to us these prosperous People plunged into a disgust of their happiness, subjected under a thousand troubles and cares, and striving vainly to stop one felicity which escapes them every moment, and is always ready to finish.

He shews us the blindness it produceth, the aversion for truth which accompanies it, the by-ways wherein it engages, the hardness of the heart it causes, the entrance it gives to all sorts of vices, and the obstacles it puts to all means of Salvation.

So many miserable Men wherewith the World is full, and that strike upon our Eyes at every turn, should be to us according to the Gospel, so many Preachers of Penance; seeing they give us occasion to make the same reflexion that Jesus Christ made to the *Jews* touching the punishment of certain *Galileans*, and the death of those who were thrown down by the Tower of *Silo*. Luc. 13. 3, 5. *Think you*, said he to them, *that these men were more faulty than other men? They were in no manner so. If then you do not penance, you shall all perish as well as they.* We should say thus to our selves, at the sight of so many who sigh under the weight of their miseries. Is it because we think our selves less culpable than they? What reason shall we have to believe it? There is then no other way but penance which can make us avoid these dismal Chastisements which the Justice of God reserves for Sinners, and whereof these evils which he exposes to our Eyes in this life, are only small and trivial beginnings.

God does not only tell us by Mens miseries, that 'tis thus that the proud deserve to be treated: That we have many other Chastisements to fear in the time of his rigor, being he punisheth already Men so severely in the time of his mercy; but he tells us moreover, that this World, filled with so many evils, does not deserve to be loved; that 'tis a prodigious blindness to be fixed thereunto,

thereunto, being ſo miſerable as it is, and not to make uſe of theſe inevitable miſeries to procure eternal happineſs.

What do ſo many dead ſay to us which we ſee every day, but that we ought to prepare our ſelves continually for this end, ſo near and ſo terrible? And that whereas our Senſes being ſtruck with theſe Objects, become thereby inſenſible by cuſtom, our Reaſon on the contrary ought to be ſo much more touched, by how much more they are frequent, becauſe it is admoniſh'd thereby, that Death threatens us every moment, and that all the World is ſurprized thereby.

But nothing can inſtruct us more than the reflexions which we may make upon the paſſions of Men, upon the clouds they produce in their Minds, which takes from them the ſight of Truths the moſt clear and ſenſible; upon the falſe lights, by which they ſeduce them, by letting them ſee only a part of what ought to ſerve as a foundation to their Judgments; upon the activity they give them to arrive at their mark; upon the fatigues and evils they make them endure; upon the vanity for that they make them ſeek it with ſo much eagerneſs; upon the miſeries, the troubles which they cauſe over and above, to thoſe who abandon themſelves thereunto; upon the torture and deſparing which they produce, either when their Object eſcapes them, or when the Heart is divided by divers contrary deſires.

And that is what permits us to ſee, as it were in a Picture, the holy Blindneſs which the deſire of being with God ought to produce in us, for all human Reaſons which ſhould be able to diſſwade us from it; the zeal with which we ought to tend to this end; the activity with which we ought to embrace all the means which may conduct to it; the patience with which we ought to ſuffer all the ills which may be met with in this way; the ſolidity and incomparable greatneſs of the good to which we incline.

'Twould be a ſtrange thing to obſerve in particular all the inſtructions which may be drawn from the commerce with Men, and the conſiderations of their Actions.

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'Tis ſufficient to ſay in general, that there is no Book which does furniſh ſo great a number, nor ſo lively ones, and that the beſt Books conſiſt almoſt only in the reflexions which learned Men make concerning Mens conduct, and which we may make like them, if we were applied thereto; that they are not drawn only from the example of illuſtrious Perſons, nor from great Actions, but from the meaneſt; that we may learn to know Men and our ſelves by the conduct of their Servants, by the diſcourſe of Country-Men, Artificers, Men, Women, and of the ſmalleſt and moſt limited Wits.

But to the end that theſe reflexions may be truly uſeful to us, and ſerve us to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, we muſt look upon them as coming from God, who is the Doctor of all Truth, as St. *Auſtin* ſaith, and who diſcovers it to us by his light; that is to ſay, by himſelf, and in himſelf; we muſt beſeech him at the ſame time to grave them in the Heart, to do us the favour that we may make uſe of them for our guide, and to free us from the faults which he makes us to take notice of, to make us firm in the Truths he diſcovers to us, to put them into our Minds and Hearts, when he ſhall preſent any occaſion to practiſe them, and not to permit that they be ſtifled, nor obſcured by our paſſions.

We ſhould only be faithful in this practice, to conjoyn the offices of *Martha* and *Mary*, to be always at the feet of Jeſus, when we are moſt employed about outward things, to be able to ſay truly that we hearken to God at the ſame time we give ear to Men, ſeeing that we ſhall in ſome ſort underſtand only the voice of God in that of Men, and only ſee God in them.

It is true, That what God ſays thus of Men, is often very far from the immediate ſenſe of their words. As for Example, When they entertain us with vain and frivolous Diſcourſes, God tells us by theſe ſame Diſcourſes what *David* ſaid by theſe words, Pſ. 118. *The fables which the wicked relate to me, are far from the ſolidity of your Law.* But that does not hinder but that theſe words from Men may be the means God makes uſe of to make us underſtand this truth, and that may help us

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to apply our selves to God, and to pray to him, provided that in understanding them we be attentive to the inward light which teacheth us to judge of them according to truth, and which is the voice whereby he makes himself understood by us.

CHAP. VII.

The fifth manner, which is to consult the eternal Truth upon each action of the day.

BUT among all the several manners of keeping our selves in the presence of God, there is not any more necessary than this, which consists in consulting him continually about all that's presented to our Thoughts, and principally about our Actions, as the eternal and unchangeable Rule by which we ought to judge of them.

'Tis in this that St. *Austin* makes the Idea of the wise Man to consist, whereof he speaks in the Third Book of the Trinity, and of which he saith, *That consulting the Law of God about all his Actions, he did not any one but what he saw in this truth ought to be done.*

'Tis wherein St. *Bernard* placeth the first Degree of Contemplation, which doubtless is the most necessary, and the least subject to illusion, *Ber.* Ser. 5. de Diver. n. 5. *Primus contemplationis gradus est ut incessanter consideremus, quid velit Dominus, quid placeat ei, quid acceptum sit coram ipso.*

And St. *Bazil* in his great Rules sheweth, that 'tis the principal means to live Christian-like, to conserve in his Mind the remembrance of God, and to observe what *David* saith; *I had my Lord God continually before my eyes.* Regul. fusius, disp. inter. 5.

But to comprehend the necessity of this means, and the method of practising it, we must know that being obliged by many titles, to do nothing but what tends to God, to judge of things as God judges of them, to have

have the sentiments he commands us to have for them; this relation of our Actions to God, and this conformity of our opinions to his Truth, consists not in barren Desires, nor in ineffective Oblations, nor in imaginary directions of the Intentions, but to do nothing but only because God orders us to do it, and effectively to rule our opinions and motions according to his Truth and Justice.

But as this Justice and this Truth are not always known to us; as the Characters which were engraven in Mans Heart have been disturbed and half blotted out by sin, and as thus it has been very hard to consult them in many affairs; God who cannot dispense with Men from living according to his Truth, which is their essential and unchangeable Rule, hath been pleased to facilitate a means to them to follow it, to cause his Laws to be written in the Scriptures, and principally in the *New Testament*; to the end that by reading them he might be able to imprint them in their Minds.

So to advise with God concerning our Actions, is only to consult the Rules of the Gospel, to acquit our selves in all occurrences of what God commands us therein. For it cannot be imagined, that there is any time where it is absolutely free to live according to ones fancy, and which is not regulated by some Laws: And if a Pagan hath said well in following natural Reason, *That there is always some duty to be accomplish'd in all parts of our lives. Nulla pars vitæ vacare officio potest.* It may a great deal better be said in following the Rules of Christian Religion.

Even when we are swayed to use some indulgences which God permits, we ought not to incline thereunto only because God permits it, but because we are feeble, and have not force to aspire to the pitch of Evangelical Counsels. And so we ought always to consult God's Laws, that in what sort soever we act, it may be Truth and Charity which guides us, and not our sensuality and our capriciousness.

It is true, we are often obliged to obey human Laws and Customs establish'd by Mens fancies, and so to practise

practiſe ſeveral things, which being indifferent in themſelves, are only preſcribed us by poſitive Precepts, which have an uncertain and a variable Truth: But the obligation of obeying theſe Laws comes not to us from theſe Laws themſelves; it comes from a ſuperior Law, that is, from an eternal Law, which makes us ſubject to human Laws, with certain conditions; ſo that when we obſerve them with ſuch a Spirit as we ought, we obey God's Juſtice effectively, when we ſeem only to obey Men.

The principal exerciſe of a Chriſtian, who is diſpoſed to paſs a day Chriſtian-like, is to foreſee as much as he can all the Actions he ought to do, to regulate them by the Maxims of the Goſpel, and not to be ſwayed, but to obſerve theſe divine Laws. But 'tis not ſufficient to conſult them once a day, we muſt renew this Duty towards the Law of God, at leaſt in all the Actions which depend upon ſome new Rule, on which we have not made one expreſs reflexion.

So we ought to form no new Deſign, nor enter upon any propoſition, not having conſulted the rule of our duty, and beg'd the Grace of God to know what we ought to do in this affair. And this ought not to be underſtood only of ſome great deſigns and important engagements which are very rare, but of all ſmall engagements which preſent themſelves, and all the ſmall affairs wherein we have any part.

We ſhould not, for Example, ever make viſits, having not conſulted whether they are in the order of our Duty, and whether there be any reaſon of Charity, or Juſtice which engages us thereunto. We ſhould never read any Book, never write any Letters without this reflexion. We ſhould never give, buy, or receive any thing: Likewiſe we ſhould ſay nothing, but examine at the ſame time whether what we ſay be good for any thing, and whether it be conform to the Laws which God has given us to guide our ſelves, our actions, and our words by.

But there are many more things to be conſidered in this Examen, not to be deceived therein, and to be able

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to assure our selves, that our Actions are conform to their Rules.

We must not only consider how things must be done; but whether they ought to be done. And to examine this point, we must not have regard only to the Justice and to the Goodness of the things in themselves; but to the particular Duty that engages us thereto. God does not demand all sort of good at the same time, nor from all sorts of persons; and there are no persons who ought not as well to think of performing the duty of their States and Conditions, as of freeing themselves from the State which obliges them to these Duties.

Although it may seem that this examen, before it be made with mature deliberation, cannot have place in the course of the occupations of a days labour, yet it is not so hard a thing as we would believe.

For either he who examines whether he ought to incline to some Action in relation to his condition, is assured before-hand, as much as is possible for him, by a serious examination, whether he is in the Employment and State wherein God would have him; or he is convinced he is not, or else he has reason to doubt of it.

If he be assured that he is, it is easie for him to judge of most things, whether the Action which presents it self be conform thereto. If he be convinced that he is not, he ought to repent presently for the rashness of his engaging, and resolve with himself to leave that State if it may be left, and examine afterwards whether the Action ought to be done by a person ill entred and engaged in this condition. For there are some conditions which ought never to be undertaken, and others which may be, by expecting till they may forsake the Employ.

A Priest, for Example, ought to quit the Administration of the Sacraments, except in case of absolute necessity, from the very moment he is convinced that he is ill entred, and that the fault of his vocation is not repaired.

On the contrary, a Religious who hath an ill vocation ought to fulfil the obligations of his condition,

what fault ſoever there may be in his entrance. And it is the ſame with married Perſons.

We ought to judge almoſt in the ſame manner of him, who ſhould doubt whether his vocation be good or not, as of thoſe who are aſſured that 'tis bad. For there are things which ought to be done by expecting till they can be examined, and others which ought to be let alone juſt after this examen; and often this determination is no hard thing.

It is then true, as has been ſaid elſewhere, *Moral Eſſay, t. 1. p. 2. 2. p. n.* 37. That in what ſtate ſoever a Man may be, in what bad Employment he may be entred, in what time and what moment he may make reflexions upon himſelf, and acknowledge his misfortune, there is always a way whereby to return to God, who begins this ſtate and this moment, which is terminated in Heaven: That is, that there are a ſequel of Duties and Actions which the divine Wiſdom preſcribes him to bring himſelf out of this ſtate. And what he is obliged to do ſo ſoon as he knows it, is to practiſe this Duty which is the neareſt to him, and which begins this way. When he ſhall have ſatisfied it, he ought to ſearch for the Will of God, concerning what he ought to do the next hour, and practiſe it faithfully; and by acting thus he will infallibly return to God.

But when the examination of vocation of the ſtate wherein one is, hath been made with great caution, it is not neceſſary to reiterate it every moment, and therefore thoſe who have an aſſurance of being in the place where God would have them, are obliged only to examine the things which are preſented, and on which they may deliberate.

They ought to judge of them as has been ſaid, by conſulting the Rule. But 'tis not enough that they ſee in this Rule that the things are good in themſelves, nor in relation to their ſtate and condition. It is neceſſary that they ſee therein, that they be good in relation to their inward Diſpoſition, and to all their other Duties.

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For there are a great quantity of good Actions, which being not neceſſarily fixed, or having no connexion with our Duties, though they are not contrary, ſhould not be undertaken, becauſe they ſurpaſs the force of our Virtue; becauſe they excel; becauſe they expoſe us too much, and engage us to a too great diſſipation.

There be others in regard of which we muſt expect God's time, which is not always ready, as Jeſus Chriſt teacheth us in the Goſpel.

Likewiſe there are ſome Actions of Duty, which ceaſe being ſo, becauſe they hinder ſatisfying ſome more important Duty. And it's this which often cauſes ſome doubts and troubles to the greateſt Saints, who having in the Heart a deſire of following God's pleaſure in all things, are ſometimes hindred from diſcerning what are the Actions they ought to prefer.

St. *Auſtin*, *Epiſt.* 65. expreſſes this difficulty in one of his Letters to St. *Paulinus*; *'Tis*, ſaith he, *an intricate and troubleſome buſineſs wherein I often find my ſelf, and which cauſes my diſturbance, in which it is very hard not to commit faults. Sometimes we are unwilling to forſake the Action which we have propoſed to our ſelves. However though not bad in it ſelf, it oftentimes becomes ſo, as hindring us from performing ſome more great and preſſing neceſſity which preſents it ſelf, and which ſhould make us leave what we are doing. How hard a thing is it never to be deceived upon theſe occaſions, and how we experience thereby the truth of theſe words of the Prophet? Who is he who comprehends the number of his faults? Hic omnino non falli difficile eſt. Hic omnino vox Prophetica prævalet; delicta quis intelligit?*

The reaſon of this, he ſays, is that 'tis neither by heavenly Voices, nor by Prophets, nor by Revelations and Extaſies, but by Events that we are advertiſed that our Deſigns and Reſolutions are not conform to the Will of God. *We have for Example*, ſaith he, *ſometimes a deſign to make a Voyage: And yet in conſulting Truth, there happens a thing which we think ought not to be forſaken. Or on the contrary we would willingly be at quiet, when Truth obliges us to make a Voyage againſt our Inclinations.*

And as theſe chances are often and frequent, and trouble thoſe who ſeek God; St. *Auſtin* deſires St. *Paulinus* to impart his thoughts upon this Subject to him, and to tell him how one ought to govern himſelf in the like occaſions.

He obſerves yet the ſame trouble and perplexity in his Book concerning the Catechiſing thoſe who are not well inſtructed, and he teacheth at the ſame time in an admirable manner the Rule we ought to follow in theſe occurrences.

We ought, ſaith he, *to regulate and diſpoſe by our light the conſequence of the Actions which we ought to do; and if we can obſerve this order, we ought to be glad, not that we have done what we would have done, but that we have cauſe to believe that we have done what God hath commanded. But if there happen ſome neceſſity which obliges us to diſturb this order, let us be flexible, and ply rather than break, by taking for our order that which God ſhall have preferred. For it is much more juſt to be conformable to his Will, than to deſire that he ſhould conform to ours. When he is buſied in chuſing an order in our Actions, Is it not reaſonable, that what is moſt excellent be eſteemed before what is not ſo? Wherefore then do we complain, that God who ſurpaſſes us ſo much in goodneſs and excellence, be eſteemed above us? And why would we be diſorderly, to conſerve our Rule?*

But not being forced by any particular neceſſity, this ought to be a reaſon to prefer one employment before another, becauſe it is preſcribed us in the regulating our days work, as having this advantage over another, that by preferring it, we avoid inconſtancy, diſorder, and variation; and ſo we have cauſe to believe, that we act after a more conformable manner to the Will of God, whereunto all VVorks are ordained.

'Tis this has made St. *Auſtin* eſtabliſh this important Principle; which is the ground of all Order which is obſerved in well governed Societies, and even among all thoſe who would live orderly. *Aug.* de Oper. Mon. c. 13. *The beſt Government is, that all daily occupations be diſtributed in a certain order, and aſſigned to certain times, that they may not trouble the Mind by their confuſion and diſorder.*

diſorder. Ea eſt optima gubernatio, ut omnia ſuis temporibus diſtributa ex ordine gerantur, ne animum humanum turbulentis implicationibus involuta perturbent.

But it is not ſufficient to caſt an Eye upon the Law of God, to regulate the body of Actions, and to decide whether we ought to incline thereunto or no; we muſt conſult it alſo to learn thereby with what Spirit they ought to be done, what diſpoſitions they demand, that we may endeavour in doing them, to enter into theſe diſpoſitions.

If, for Example, we entertain a perſon who hath need to be gently ſpoken unto, with reſervedneſs, and in a ſerious and edifying manner; who cannot endure to be jeſted withal, who is vexed at too free cenſures, although true and ſolid, we muſt firſt conſult the Rule of Charity which preſcribes theſe Devoirs to us, pray to God that he may make us capable of obſerving them.

Each occupation of this life has its Rules and Diſpoſitions: They ought to be every one animated with a certain Spirit, and 'tis Truth which inſtructs us with them. We muſt then conſult Truth without intermiſſion, and look upon it as the Model and Original which we ought to copy out and repreſent by our Actions.

But as we are not only applied to our ſelves, but alſo ſpectators of other Mens Actions, and of what happens to them, which cannot be done without forming divers Judgments, and having different Motions upon their ſcore, we muſt ſtill govern them by Truth and Juſtice, becauſe they are not leſs capable of being true or falſe, juſt or unjuſt, ſince they purify the Soul if they are equitable, and defile it if they be not ſo; and appearing often outwardly, they are ordinarily the ſource of Scandal, or of the edification which we cauſe.

We ſhould for this reaſon accuſtom our ſelves to judge all things according to Truth, and ſuffer nothing in us but the motions which Truth produceth, to make nothing appear outwardly but the Judgments and Motives which are governed on Truth. And for this end it is neceſſary to know it, and as much as is poſſible not to

let it go out of ſight, that we may avoid thoſe illuſions which worldly Things cauſe, when we behold them not in relation to this Rule.

To practiſe perfectly this Rule, is to be truly wiſe, and St. *Bernard* had no other Idea of it: *In Cant. Ser.* 50. *n.* 8. *Give me*, ſaid he, *a Man who loves God with all his Heart, and who prefers him above all things; who loves himſelf and his Neighbours, becauſe they love God, and who loves his Enemies, becauſe they are capable to love him; whoſe Heart is inclined towards his Kinſfolks, with a more tender affection, by reaſon of a tie of Nature; towards thoſe who have inſtructed him according to the Spirit, with a more abundant affection, by reaſon of the excellence of Grace he hath received by their means; who embraceth thus, with a love* regulated by Truth, *all other Objects of Charity; who contemns the Earth; who hath his Eyes lifted up towards Heaven; who makes uſe of this World as if he uſed it not at all, and who diſtinguiſheth by a certain inward taſte the Objects which he muſt enjoy from thoſe which he muſt only uſe; who applies himſelf to tranſitory things only tranſitorily, as he ought, in conſideration that he muſt do ſo; but who is link'd to eternal things by a firm and eternal love: Give me*, ſay I, *a Man who hath theſe diſpoſitions, and I ſhall make no ſcruple of calling him wiſe, becauſe he taſteth every thing according as it is, and may ſay of himſelf, with truth and ſecurity*, That God hath ordered and given him Charity: *But where ſhall we find this Man, and when ſhall we be in this diſpoſition? I tell you this with tears in my Eyes. How long will this happy ſtate be known to us, but by an inconſtant order which comes to us as from far, without being able to taſte it effectively? We ſee our Country as it were at a diſtance, but we do not poſſeſs it. O Truth! Country of the exiled, and the end of their exile, I ſee thee, but I cannot enter, being with-held by the Fleſh; I am not worthy to be admitted into thy Boſom, being polluted with Sin:* O veritas Exulum patria, exilii finis! Video te, ſed intrare non ſinor; carne retentus, ſed nec dignus admitti peccatis ſordens.

VVe ſee with what ardor St. *Bernard* ſighed after this ſtate, and this ardor it ſelf with which he deſired it, ought to make us judge that he made his Piety to conſiſt

ſiſt in continual Vigilance, to the end he might not ſuffer any motions in himſelf, nor any ſentiments which ſhould not be conform to the order of Charity, which is preſcribed us by the Laws of God.

It is very true, That 'tis impoſſible during our abode upon Earth to have always reaſonable Thoughts and juſt Motives, ſeeing that Concupiſcence, which lives always in us, being excited by Objects, will not ceaſe producing ill Deſires and wicked Thoughts.

But if we cannot hinder our ſelves from feeling them, we may at leaſt condemn and diſapprove them as ſoon as we feel them, and ſtop this tumult within us, without ſhewing it outwardly. 'Tis what Truth orders us when we are thus agitated by ſome paſſions which we condemn. And we muſt not fear that there is any Hypocriſie in ſhewing in this manner nothing but Peace and Tranquility, when we are inwardly agitated and troubled. For 'tis Chriſtian Prudence that preſcribes us this Artifice; ſeeing there is no better means, as St. *Auſtin* ſays, in *Pſ.* 75. *p.* 138. to teach Concupiſcence not to riſe any more, than to ſhew that it riſeth unprofitably, and in vain: *Diſcat non ſurgere, quia fruſtra ſurrexit.*

It is not ſufficient to be attentive to Truth at the beginning of each Action, each Employ, and of each Enterpriſe; but even in the purſuance of thoſe which continue any time; we muſt obſerve them from time to time, to ſee that we do not ſequeſter our ſelves from it. For 'tis but too frequent to be engaged preſently in certain Actions through a motive of pleaſing God, and to fix our ſelves thereunto afterwards without any relation to God, either through the pleaſure we meet therein, or through ſome human advantages which we find there. VVe begin by Charity, and we continue through Cupidity; ſo much cunning has the Devil to ſubſtitute the Creature in the place of the Creator, without our taking notice of the alteration; which can hardly be avoided, but by often reflecting on the manner how we conduct our ſelves in the ſequel of our Actions.

In fine, as St. *Gregory* the great recommends oftentimes, (*vide Gr. in Mor. in Job l.* 1. *c.* 8. *and* 17. *c.* 19. *and l.* 9. *c.* 10. *and l.* 12. *c.* 15.) if it be neceſſary to watch thus over our Actions before we do them, and whilſt we do them, it is no leſs neceſſary, after they are done, to make a ſmall examen touching the Method how we have diſcharged our ſelves of our Duty to God; which obliges us to an humble acknowledgment of the faults we have committed, and ſentiments of recognition, if God has done us the favour to ſurmount thereby ſome temptation. And ſo by conſecrating to God by ſeveral means, the beginning, the middle, and the end of our Actions, all our whole life, which is only a ſeries of theſe Actions, will be conſecrated to him.

But to prevent theſe Scruples which may ariſe in thoſe, who having a great deſire to act nothing which may be contrary to God's VVill, would urge too far what is in this Chapter about the examen which ought to be made of theſe Actions before the doing them; it is good to add here an advice of St. *Francis Sales*, which takes away the exceſs. 'Tis that we ought not to amuſe our ſelves in reſpect of ſmall Actions, which are of no importance, to diſcern exactly whether they be more conform to the VVill of God than others, when it does not appear manifeſtly.

I adviſe you (ſaith he to his *Theotime*, l. 8. of the love of God, c. 14.) *of a troubleſome temptation, which often happens to Souls who have a great deſire to follow in all things what is moſt according to the Will of God. For the Enemy in all occurrences makes them doubt, whether it is the Will of God, that they do one thing rather than another; as for Example, whether it be the Will of God that they eat with a Friend, or that they do not; whether they take for their Garments White or Black; whether they Faſt* Friday *or* Saturday; *whether they follow their Recretations or not, in which they waſte much time. And whilſt they are buſied and puzzled in diſcerning what is beſt, they unprofitably loſe the occaſion of doing many good things, the execution of which would be more to God's Glory, than diſtinguiſhing of good and ill, for which they are ſo amuſed, would be.*

We

We are not accuſtomed to weigh ſmall Money, but only pieces of importance. Trade would be too troubleſome, and would waſte too much time, if we were forced to weigh Pence and Halfpence, and ſuch like. So that we ought not to weigh all ſorts of ſmall Actions, to know whether they be better than others. And even there is very often ſuperſtition in making this examen. For to what purpoſe ſhall we make a difficulty, whether it be better to hear Maſs in one Church than another, to make a Net, or to ſew, to give Alms to a Man or to a Woman?

It is then ſufficient when theſe kind of doubts preſent themſelves, to caſt an Eye lightly upon the Rule; and when it gives us no light, it is better to determine, than to amuſe ones ſelf, to deliberate unprofitably.

'Tis true, That in proportion as God's light encreaſes in the Soul, it finds ſome more curious and delicate differences betwixt Actions, which appear equally good to perſons leſs underſtanding. But as it is juſt to follow this light when we have it, we muſt not be tormented when we have it not, what is moſt conformable to God's VVill in theſe ſmall Actions.

CHAP. VIII.

The ſixth manner how to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, which is to open our Eyes to exterior temptations, to which we are expoſed, and to have continually recourſe to God to be preſerved from them.

THE Vigilance which Jeſus Chriſt preſcribes to us in the Goſpel, does not only ſhew us God as our Rule; it ſhews us him as our only refuge, and our only protector in all perils which environ us; and at the ſame time lets us ſee thoſe perils, that is to ſay, the temptations which attack us, and put us in danger of loſing the life of the Soul.

If Vigilance diſcover to us God acting in all Creatures, and inſtructing us by them; it alſo diſcovers to us

us the Devil, employing all Creatures against us. For there is not one which he makes not use of sometime to deceive us, to poyson us, to enflame our passions, to fix us to worldly Things, and to draw us from God.

Philosophers desire that we should be prepared for accidents, because they may all happen; but we have a motive much more powerful, to prepare our selves against temptations; which is, that they certainly happen; *In hoc positi sumus.* For we have an irreconcilable Enemy, and the order of God it self is, that Men be tried by temptation; which made the wise Man say, *Eccl.* 12. *v.* 1. That in entring into the Service of God, we must remain constant in Justice and Fear, and prepare the Soul for temptation.

We ought then in preparing our selves in the Morning for the Actions of the Day, to have in our thoughts that we shall be tempted, that the Devil will set upon us in divers manners; which ought to fill us with sentiments of fear. For who would not fear going into a Town troubled and infected with the Plague, where he must expect every moment to be seised with that pestilential Disease? Who would not be seised with fear, when sitting at a Table, where he could not forbear eating, and where nevertheless the most part of the Meat should be poysoned? And lastly, Who would not be afrighted walking in the dark, in a place full of Snares and Precipices? What care ought to be had to free ones self from these Dangers? Yet this is the state we are daily in, opening the Eyes to worldly Objects, and entring into commerce with Men. The Devil hides himself in all Creatures; he arms them all against us; he endeavours to breathe his Poyson into all our Senses; he pierces us on all sides with a thousand enflamed Darts, as the Apostle saith; he sets a thousand traps for us; he opens a thousand Precipices for us. We have but one single way to avoid all these Dangers, which is to run continually and have recourse to God to obtain his assistance; and nevertheless our blindness is so great, that 'tis what we think least of.

If

If the Governor of a place of importance, knowing that 'tis beſiged with an Enemy, who thinks of nothing but ſurpriſing him, and that he cannot be ſurpriſed but he muſt loſe his life, ſhould nevertheleſs leave all the Gates open, and think of nothing but to divert himſelf, might he not very reaſonably be taken for a mad Man? But how much more are we Mad, who knowing by Faith that the Devil goes round about us to get poſſeſſion of our Hearts, that he is ſtronger than we are, and that he endeavours only to caſt us away eternally, we nevertheleſs think thereon ſo little, that this thought makes the leaſt of our troubles and unquietneſs?

'Tis a ſtrange thing, ſaid a very devout Man, that the Devil prays God in ſome ſort to abandon Men to him; *Expetivit Sathanas ut cribraret vos ſicut triticum*, and that Men dream of all things but praying God to be their ſafeguard againſt ſo powerful an Enemy, and being careful to avoid the Snares he lays for them.

This negligence is ſo much more pernicious, by how much the principal means of not falling under theſe temptations is to know them, to prepare againſt them, and to have recourſe to God. He commands us to diſcover them by Vigilance, and that this Vigilance incline us to Prayer; *Vigilate & Orate.* And as we are always attacked in ſome place, and always in danger of being overcome, it follows that our Vigilance and Prayers ought to be continual.

There are ſo many ſorts, that 'tis impoſſible to deſcribe them all. But generally ſpeaking, there are ſome that Men are expoſed to in all ſtates and conditions, and others which ariſe from a particular ſtate, wherein each one finds himſelf. There are ſome which are very rare, and others which are very frequent. There are ſome which are favoured by our inclinations, and others we have no propenſity to. There are ſome groſs and viſible, others cunning and hidden. There are ſome which have great and long conſequences, and others which are leſs important and more tranſitory.

Seeing that we muſt reſiſt all theſe temptations, it is neceſſary to be attentive thereunto; but to the end we may

may make uſe of this temptation to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, we muſt apply our ſelves to thoſe we meet withal in our Exerciſes and in the courſe of our Actions.

This Application will make us diſcover an infinite of them, which eſcape from thoſe who think not of them, and we ſhall be ſurpriſed at the number of thoſe which are met with in the moſt innocent Occupations. We ſhall find, for Example, That the converſe we have even with orderly perſons, is full of them; we are tempted there to expoſe our ſelves too much, to cleave too much to them; to forget God by this means; to be out of poſſeſſion of the Soul; to ſay unadviſedly ſomething to her advantage to get their praiſes. We are thereby tempted with impatience, if it happen that we are not of their opinion; with arrogancy, if we think we have ſome advantage over them; with rudeneſs and bitterneſs, if they have ſomething that's troubleſome; with flattery, if we have intereſt to pleaſe them; with curioſity to know things, either unuſeful to us, or that they would not have us to know; with ſcoffing, if they appear ridiculous to us upon ſome ſcore. We are tempted with ſpite and indignation, if any thing be ſaid which touches the Pride we are addicted to; with complacency, if Men approve of our Actions without our procuring it; with envy for ſpeaking too much, if what we hear ſaid form in our Minds divers thoughts. We are tempted to deſpiſe others, if we meet with any defect; or on the contrary, to imitate them in their defects, if we do not acknowledge them. We are tempted to embrace their paſſions, and to enter and follow their ways, which although good, is not perchance ours. We are tempted to ſide with a great many Judgments ill grounded, which are afterwards the ſource of raſh Diſcourſes.

All theſe temptations, and many others which the light of God might diſcover to us in our Diſcourſes with Men, do ſhew that 'tis a great raſhneſs to enter into converſation with any one, whoſoever it be, not having raiſed up our Hearts to God to beg his Succours, and that

that we cannot renew too often, in the purſuit of Diſcourſe, this attention towards God to reſiſt the temptations which happen.

Beſides theſe temptations, which may be called *Action*, becauſe they conſiſt in the Actions and Motions of the Soul, there are others which may be ſtiled *Omiſſion*, which conſiſt in omitting and neglecting the occaſions which are preſented of practiſing Vertue in our Actions.

For to make uſe of the ſame Example, if there be no converſe where we are not tempted to commit many ill Actions, there is alſo none where we can do any good ones; wherefore the Omiſſion by conſequence is ill.

God may be honoured by all thoſe which we ſee, in the manner he is there; we may obſerve ſomething there which may help us to correct our Manners, and advance us in Vertue; we may practiſe Humility by humbling our ſelves in regard of them, and by placing our ſelves in the loweſt places, through a true and ſincere ſentiment. We may practiſe Meekneſs, by bearing mildly the VVeakneſs which may be obſerved therein; Charity, by comforting them; Zeal, by reforming them; Patience, by ſuffering them; Goodneſs, by yielding to their juſt or indifferent Deſires. We may give ear to God, by hearkening to them with reſpect. We may profit by their Vertues, in imitating them; by their Defects, making uſe of them that we may avoid them, and praying for them.

'Tis a great misfortune to loſe ſo many occaſions of practiſing Vertue, and to do all things without Reflexion, by following our natural inclinations. For 'tis to deprive our ſelves of the means God hath given us to enrich our ſelves by, and we ought not to wonder after this if we be poor, ſeeing that paſſing through places full of riches, we do not vouchſafe to heap them up; nor if we remain meagre and ſtarved, ſeeing that being in plenty of Food and Nouriſhment, we are careleſs of taking what's neceſſary for our ſuſtenance.

VVe

We ought to consider two sorts of temptations in all Employs, Exercises, ordinary and extraordinary Occupations, which make up our lives; as in eating, reading, praying, visiting, and in particular actions of our Vocation. And although oftentimes we dream not of them, unless in a confused manner, yet this attention will suffice to make us avoid the most palpable and the most dangerous.

But in this general prospect, which we ought to have of temptations which are met with in all Employs, the experience we have of our weakness, and of the faults into which we are accustomed to fall, does apply us generally to those which are most frequent to us, and which we have proposed to our selves to oppose. And thus in beginning these Actions we ought to renew the resolution we have made of resisting them, and the prayers we ought to have made to God, to obtain the Grace to overcome them; and by this means our whole life will become a continual warfare against Vice, a continual Praying, and a faithful execution of holy Desires which God has inspired us with for our Perfection.

One of the greatest profits of this practice, of seeing face to face in the things wherein we are obliged to deliberate, the temptations which accompany them, is that it gives us means to judge more advisedly of all, and to have above all things sentiments more conform to Truth and Faith.

For the greatest source of Errors whereinto we fall in our Judgments, is that generally we do not observe the Objects, but as they are sensible, and in relation to what they have to our Concupiscence, which being very ready and lively in its Actions, makes us presently discover therein all that flatters or incommodes it. Nevertheless 'tis not by this that we must judge of them; but by the relations they have to ours, and to other Mens Salvation; that is to say, by the obstacles or the facility they atribute thereunto, there being nothing that's good which is not assisting to it, nor nothing that's bad, but what's a hinderance.

We

We cannot therefore well judge things without diving into the temptations which they produce, and the uſe the Devil makes thereof to deſtroy us, ſeeing that 'tis by theſe temptations they ſerve as obſtacles to our Salvation.

'Tis but practiſing this Rule faithfully, to diſarm in ſome ſort the Devil, being he only deceives thoſe for the moſt part who are negligent of themſelves, by ſhewing them the Goods of this life, becauſe they have ſomething that's attractive, and hiding what they have that's dangerous from them.

Who could deſire, for Example, great Fortunes, great Employs, and great Dignities, if they looked upon them in this manner, and conſidered thoſe who are raiſed thereunto, as charged with an inſupportable burthen, as obliged to walk in a ſtraight path, and all environed with precipices, and as being in the miſerable condition and neceſſity of being loſt for ever, or offer to themſelves much greater violences than other Men?

In this manner this proſpect would diſcover to us a new World, where all would be turned topſie-turvy, where the happy would appear miſerable, and the miſerable happy; mean people great, and great people mean; what afflicts us in the outward World, would comfort us in this, with this difference, that the afflions and conſolations which would ariſe from the conſideration of this new World, would be more real and ſolid than thoſe which are produced by the Objects we regard only outwardly, which is what we call here the exteriour World.

Doubtleſs there is nothing can be more profitable to us than this conſideration of all worldly Things, in relation to eternal Happineſs or Miſery, provided that we would not ſtick there, but would make uſe thereof to raiſe us up to God by the ſeveral motives which this conſideration ought to produce, ſometimes beſeeching him to aſſiſt thoſe we ſhall look upon as expoſed to theſe temptations; ſometimes bleſſing him that he has delivered us from them; now by conſidering the bent we have thereto, and by begging of God that he do not

abandon

abandon us; now by conſidering how much Men are deceived in their Judgments, for want of penetrating to the bottom of things, and crying out with the Prophet, *Filii hominum uſque quo gravi corde, ut quid diligitis vanitatem & queritis mendacium.* And by theſe ſeveral means we ſhall find in all the Objects which we ſhall perceive by the Senſes, or which are preſented to us by Mens Diſcourſes, wherewithal to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, and to entertain our ſelves in continual Prayer.

CHAP. IX.

The ſeventh manner how to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, which is, to be Vigilant over our inward temptations.

BUT if Chriſtian Vigilance ought to apply us, as we have ſhewn it does, to diſcover the temptations which outward Objects might cauſe in us, it ought yet to render us more attentive to thoſe which ſpring from within us; that's to ſay, to the motives of our Concupiſence which corrupt and ſpoil our Minds, which infect our Hearts, which draw oftentimes the conſent of our Will, and which ſpreads it ſelf in the End outwardly, by means of our Words and Actions.

There is need of a continual Vigilance, whether it be to hinder theſe ill effects, by correcting our Thoughts, by putting a ſtop to our Deſires, and by refuſing them the Miniſtry of the Members of our Bodies, as the Apoſtle ordains it us; or to condemn them when they are arrived. For the defect of Vigilance cauſeth both the one, and the other of theſe two Evils. It ſuffers Concupiſence to act, and it hides what it does; becauſe a Soul that watcheth not is often abſolutely loſt, ſhe acts in a manner like an Animal, ſhe ſuffers her ſelf to be carried away by Objects, and ſhe is ruled by them.

To

To poſſeſs the Soul and the Heart, is properly the contrary Vertue to this ſubjecting of a Soul to the Objects, to which ſhe applies her ſelf. And to comprehend in what it conſiſts, we need but conſider what 'tis we call to be poſſeſſed of in relation to the World.

We ſay a Man enjoys himſelf when he ſees himſelf act, when nothing eſcapes him that he is not aware of, when he has all the regards he ought to have, when he is Maſter of his motions, and that he rules them for that end which he propoſed to himſelf.

So to enjoy ones ſelf according to God, is to ſee himſelf act, to be witneſs of his motions both inward and outward, and to regulate them by the ſight of God. And, on the contrary, not to poſſeſs or enjoy ones ſelf, is either not to ſee ones ſelf act, or not to be able to with-hold his motions.

Intereſt and violent paſſions cauſe both, in regard of the World, in thoſe who love it. For 'tis a ſtrange thing how much the deſire of being advanced, and the fear of being hurt, renders them applicable to all; how circumſpect they are in all their Actions and Words; even to what point they ſtrive to break and maſter their humours.

But as Charity is often leſs active in good People, than cupidity in the Worldly, we often ſee them leave their ſtation, to follow blindly ſome ſmall and frivolous paſſions, and act without reflection, by humour, and by a meer impreſſion of Objects.

This is the fault Chriſtian Vigilance ought to correct, by forcing the Mind to apply it ſelf to what it does, placing before its Eyes the concerns it ought to have, by quitting its uncleanneſſes, by endeavouring to maintain the Soul in the ſame ſituation, by cutting away all inequalities of humours, and by endeavouring, at leaſt, to ſigh for all thoſe which eſcape us.

And this is it Chriſtian Vigilance cannot do, unleſs it hinder the Mind from abandoning it ſelf, and delivering it ſelf intirely over to the Objects which preſent themſelves; and unleſs it divide its attention, ſo that it give a part thereof to the Action, and make uſe of the

other to conſider what paſſeth in it ſelf; as if it had two Spirits, the one acting, and the other Witneſs and Judge of its Actions.

It cannot be denied but that this reſerve, as to one part of our attention, or rather this double attention, the one to the Objects of our Thoughts, of our Motions, of our Actions; the other to the Thoughts, Motions, and Actions themſelves, muſt be troubleſome, and that the inclination of the Soul muſt act without ſo many reflections, by giving its ſelf entirely to what is pleaſing, and only avoiding the more groſs faults which mind and advertiſe us of themſelves.

But the pains we find therein, ariſeth only for that we are but little concerned for what relates to God; becauſe we have none at all when we are ſtirred a little violently, and all the reſpects we ought to have are then preſented to the Mind. If, for example, we entertain any one in a place where we know we may be overheard by ſome conſiderable perſon, we ſhould not forbear to regulate our Words concerning what might pleaſe him, and have as much attention to the Judgments he ſhould make of what we ſay, as to thoſe of the perſons with whom we ſhould diſcourſe. We ſhould then need only to be lively penetrated with the preſence of God, to have no more trouble for this double attention, and it is very juſt that we ſuffer this trouble, as being an effect of our want of Vertue.

But if the ſight of the preſence of God ſways us naturally to a Vigilance of our ſelves, and makes the practice of it eaſie; a Vigilance of our ſelves inclines us alſo to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God. For by diſcovering to us what paſſeth in us, the paſſions which ariſe thereby, the bad branches which our corruption puts forth daily, makes us prone to haſten to God, and to ſhew him our Sores, to ſigh before him for our Miſeries. So this ſort of Vigilance is yet an excellent means of keeping our ſelves always in God's preſence by continual Prayer, ſeeing that Prayer conſiſts chiefly, according to St. *Paul*, in a ſecret ſighing and lamenting, which a Soul penetrated by her miſery ſends to God, thereby to beg her deliverance.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Particular means how to keep our ſelves in the preſence of God, by the exerciſe of certain Vertues, which may be joyned to the moſt part of our Actions.

AS Man's Mind is ſo weak in this life, that it hath need of ſome variety in its exerciſe, and objects to which it applies it ſelf; it is good to propoſe divers means to keep our ſelves attentive to God, that we may remedy the diſtaſte and lazineſs which the uniformity of the ſame thoughts is accuſtomed to produce. I ſhall add then yet to thoſe which I have already explicated, other particular practices which may be joyned to all Actions, and keep us always in the preſence of God. Piety may make us invent divers ſorts, and I propoſe theſe only as Models of thoſe which may be preſcribed to us according to our different occaſions.

For Example, We may, to practiſe Humility, add or joyn to all thoſe the acknowledgment of our unworthineſs, grounded upon our double wretchedneſs, one of which comes by Nature, and the other by the condition of Sinners. For this double nothingneſs making us deſerve nothing, gives us reaſon in all times, and in all places, and upon all occaſions, to confeſs to God that we are unworthy of all.

We may then acknowledge with Truth and Juſtice, that we are not worthy of his favours, neither interior nor exterior; that we do not deſerve the aſſiſtance of Creatures, nor the honour which is given us, nor the friendſhip of honeſt Men; that we are unworthy that any one apply himſelf to us, or treat us otherwiſe than with ſcorn, diſdain, and with outrage; that we are not deſerving to ſee the light, nor to live; that all this may be taken from us, and we have not cauſe to pretend that God does us any injuſtice.

Thus we may joyn this confeſſion to all that happens to us, and renew an hundred times a day, in the preſence of God, the conſideration of our unworthineſs.

But this protestation must be sincere, nor must we pretend, having done it, to complain of those who should treat us as we avow we deserve to be. If then we be unworthy, that there be an acknowledgment for us, as Truth ought to make confess, let us not complain at all that we had none. If we be not worthy to be esteemed, let us not think that we are injured because we are not esteemed.

We may likewise find means in all things to practise Thanksgiving according to the Apostle's Precept; *In omnibus gratias agentes.* For there is no time wherein we do not receive some Grace and some Benefit from God, either by himself, or by his Creatures; and in what sort soever we receive it, 'tis always just to give him thanks for it.

This Thanksgiving is not only in what Men call Goods, but also what they call Ills; because these Ills, such as they are, are always much less than those which we deserve; and so they have more of the Sweetness and Mercy of God, than of his Rigor and Justice; and moreover, if we know how to make good use thereof, they would give us means to avoid great Ills, and to deserve great Goods. So that as this is our fault if we do not make use of them, they cannot pass, as coming from God, but as Silver which he gives us to pay our debts; as Seed which he grants us to convey to our Souls the fruits of Justice; as Materials, whereof he makes us a Present, to build our selves an eternal Mansion-house.

Likewise, If we would entertain our selves with the desire of a heavenly life, and with a sighing that our exile ought to cause in us, there is nothing which might not be able to excite and renew these motions. For the Goods and Ills of this life, the Vertues and Vices therein, are equally proper. The Goods of the Earth make us conceive the greatness of Heavenly ones, making us conclude, that if what God gives to the wicked be so agreeable, what he reserves for the Just ought to be so incomparably more. And the Ills of the Earth incline us more directly to sigh after that life, where we

we ſhall enjoy a perfect Peace exempt from all ſort of Ills. The Vertues of this life being but as ſome drops which fall from the eternal Juſtice, ought to make us deſire to quench our thirſt at the Fountain it ſelf of this Juſtice. And laſtly, The ſins which we commit continually ought to make us hate this preſent life above all things, being we ſhall not be delivered, but in Heaven from the corruption which produceth them.

What is there in this life that is not capable of renewing in us the Idea of Eternity, ſeeing that we ſee nothing therein which does not vaniſh and ſlide away, and that this vaniſhing of worldly Things ought to make them all as nothing to us, and encline us to fix our Hearts on nothing that is changeable, inſubſiſtent, and not eternal? *Avertere animum a temporalibus, & eum mundatum convertere ad æterna.*

It may alſo be ſaid, That in what inward diſpoſition God employs us in, provided that it be a little lively, it finds means to ſpread it ſelf every where. So St. *Bernard* was continually excited by theſe Words: *Bernarde, ad quid veniſti?* And he found there a ſource of Fervour and Zeal, which emboldened him in all his Actions.

Others likewiſe found in certain little Verſes of Scripture, ſome motives of ſtirring up continually the love of God in them; and each ought to be careful to chuſe ſome which he ſhould often repeat, and which ſhould contain, as it were, an abridgment of his Prayers, and of the diſpoſitions whereunto he ſhould tend.

This is what is called Aſpirations or Ejaculatory Prayers in the Books of Devotion; and the practice of it is by ſo much more eſtimable, as it appears by St. *Auſtin*, and by *Caſſian*, that it was one of the principal Devotions of thoſe *Egyptian* Monaſticks, who have made uſe of this model before all others, *In* Epiſt. ad Probram. *'Tis reported*, ſaith this Doctor, *that the* Egyptian *Monaſticks make Prayers very frequently, but very ſhort, and make haſte in ſome ſort to ſend them up towards Heaven, for fear leſt this attention which is ſo lively, ſo frequent, and ſo neceſſary in Prayer, ſhould come to ſlacken by a longer continuance.*

CHAP. XI.

Means to keep our selves in the presence of God, which is to represent to our Souls the humanity of Jesus Christ.

I Have on purpose reserved for the last of these means of keeping our selves in the presence of God, this which is the most counselled by those who have treated of a spiritual life; that is, to have Jesus Christ always in our thoughts, by representing him according to his humanity in some of his Mysteries; that is to say, either as a Child, or as conversing with Men, or in some circumstance of his passion, or lastly, seated at the right hand of his Father, which is the state wherein the Apostle exhorts us to adore him.

We cannot in general doubt of the necessity of this practice, seeing that Christ's humanity is the true way to come to God. Also we see that the Church does what she can the Year about to place Jesus Christ before our Eyes, in all the Mysteries of his mortal and glorious life. St. *Paul* affirms particularly, that he had endeavoured to imprint in the Mind of the *Galatians* so lively an Idea of Jesus Christ suffering for us, that he did not fear to say that Jesus Christ had been crucified before their Eyes, Gal. 3. v. 1. *Ante quorum Oculos Jesus Christus præscriptus est in vobis crucifixus.* It also appeared that 'twas the Devotion of the First Christians, which made St. *Clement* say, in the *Elogium* he made of the *Corinthians*, Epist. ad Cor. *That the sufferings of God were before their Eyes.*

'Tis, in particular, by this means that what St. *Austin* prescribed to the ignoranter sort of Christians, may be practised. *Brethren*, said he, Aug. in Joan. Tr. 2. *behold the counsel I give you. If you will live like Christians, cleave to Jesus Christ according to what he has undertaken for our Salvation, that so you may arrive at what he is by his divine Nature. And this is what he includes in this maxim, that the Spirits who are not as yet capable of conceiving the Divinity,*

Divinity, ought to cleave to the Croſs, to the Paſſion, and to the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and make uſe thereof as a Ship which may conduct them to what as yet they cannot ſee.

But this conſideration of Chriſt's humanity is not only neceſſary for mean, but very profitable for great Men. *The Croſs of Chriſt*, as this holy Doctor ſays, *in* Joan. Tr. 98. *is not only the Milk of Infants, but alſo the ſolid Food of thoſe who are advanced: Chriſtus crucifixus & lac ſugentibus & cibus proficientibus.* So there are none to whom it is not very uſeful, to have in Mind Chriſt's humanity. And therefore St. *Bernard* Counſels to pronounce, without intermiſſion, the name of Jeſus, to renew in the Mind the Idea of Jeſus Chriſt God and Man. *I cannot*, ſaith he, in Cant. Ser. 15. n. 6 and 7. *taſte any Writing, if I find not therein the name of Jeſus. I cannot ſuffer Diſcourſes, if I do not hear the name of Jeſus ſpoken of. Jeſus is Milk in our Mouths; he is agreeable Muſick to our Ears; he is a ſource of Joy in our Hearts; he is a Phyſician for all our Diſeaſes. If any one find himſelf ſad, let him think of the name of Jeſus, and let it paſs from his Mind into his Mouth. Nothing is more proper than this name to repreſs the impetuoſity of Wrath, and to diſſipate the ſwelling of Pride, to heal the wounds of Envy, to ſtop all the diſſolution of Intemperance, to extinguiſh the flames of Concupiſcence, to qualifie the thirſt of Avarice, to ſeparate us from all ſhameful Paſſions. Behold, O my Soul! the excellent remedy which you have in reſerve in the Veſſel of this ſacred Name; a remedy ſo wholeſome, that there is not any Diſeaſe which gives not place thereto.*

This is the profit St. *Bernard* found by thinking continually on Jeſus Chriſt. For it would be nothing to pronounce the name of Jeſus without thinking of him. But 'tis not neceſſary for that to have always the Image of him painted in the Imagination, which is impoſſible for thoſe who have it not, and dangerous for thoſe who have it too lively. That which this Saint then recommends to us, is to have Jeſus Chriſt preſent in our Minds. Now we may think of Jeſus Chriſt without imagining him to our ſelves. The imagination is nothing but a ſource for the thought. What if it ſhould

be found, that it were an obſtacle by applying the Mind too much; either it ſhould be moderated in the uſe, or elſe entirely baniſh'd; there being certain perſons to whom the lively repreſentation of the Myſteries of Jeſus Chriſt, known by the imagination, might be a Subject of Illuſion and Temptation, and to whom by conſequence we ought to give counſel not to conceive them, but by Faith; as St. *Francis Sales* obſerves in one of his Letters, *Book* 2. *Let.* 22.

Laſtly, As the World attracts us continually by all the Objects it preſents to us, and the Devil has a thouſand tricks to fix us to, and to fill us with them, ſo Piety ought to render us ingenious in finding means to fix us to God. And 'tis by theſe ſorts of inventions, whereof it is ſpoken in the Scripture, that the Juſt live and are nouriſh'd. *Dicite juſte quoniam bene, quoniam fructum ad inventionem ſuarum comedit.*

CHAP. XII.

That one of the greateſt means of keeping our ſelves in the preſence of God, is to manage by Prayer all the interval of Actions.

AS Bodies are almoſt never ſo perfectly joyn'd, but that there is always ſome little intervals fill'd with Air, which ſeparates them, ſo we cannot make ſo continued a ſeries of Actions, but there will remain ſome ſmall vacuities; and theſe vacuities which are ſometimes neceſſary for the freeing the Mind, may be uſefully fill'd with ſome Prayers which would not oblige to a great attention, which would terminate rightly the precedent Actions, and prepare thoſe which follow.

But Men have ſo little care of their ſpiritual Advancement, that generally there is nothing worſe employed than that time which might be the beſt: For thoſe vacuities are oftentimes only fill'd with vain thoughts, and uſeleſs reflections; and 'tis by this means principally that the Devil caſts ſo much venom into the Soul,

Soul, finding leſs entrance thereinto when the Soul is buſied.

Every one ought to accuſtom himſelf to manage for God theſe ſmall times; to raiſe, for example, his Spirit to God, when his ſleep is interrupted in the Night, when he awakes in the Morning, when he is dreſſing himſelf, and when he goes from one place to another. He would find by this means conſiderable times for Prayer, and he would not have cauſe to complain ſo much that he is over-toil'd with labour, and that he can find no time to beſtow on God and himſelf.

I know very well that Nature which ſearcheth every where its eaſe, will find it ſelf charged, if it were made ſubject to a new attention in theſe intervals, and that it had rather give it ſelf over to thoughts which come of themſelves, and which ſeize it as ſoon as it applies it ſelf to them: But if this practice is laborious at the beginning, it would become much leſs at the end; and there are likewiſe many Prayers which weary the Mind leſs, than certain thoughts whereunto we abandon our ſelves in the vacuities. After all, we cannot weary our ſelves about any thing more uſeful, than to ſtop the entrance of the Heart from the Devil to purifie our Actions, and to nouriſh and ſuſtain the Soul in the continual need ſhe hath to repair her ſpiritual Forces, which are enervated as well as thoſe of the Body, by the continuity of Actions.

'Tis by theſe means, and by all others that I have deſcribed in this Treatiſe, that the advice St. *Paul* gives us of praying always, may be practiſed. *Sine intermiſſione orate.* And by the practice of this advice we are prepared in an excellent manner for particular Prayers which we make at certain times, becauſe we find our ſelves abſolutely diſpoſed thereto when this time is come, and we have already before-hand the principal end of theſe Prayers, ſeeing that we chuſe not theſe times for Prayer in a more expreſs manner, but only that the Unction we receive thereby may be ſpread through all our Actions, and may cauſe at the end of our lives a continual Prayer.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

That the practice of Christian Vigilance includes that of Recollection.

THere is nothing that all those, who prescribe Rules for the guide of Souls, who aspire to a more perfect life than the generality of Christians, do recommend to them more than what they call Recollection, and they make deservedly the ground-work of this Christian perfection, to which they pretend to incline them, it being impossible that a Spirit dissipated and evaporated can ever make any progress in Vertue.

But it would not be a small fault, nor an inconsiderable illusion, to believe this Vertue necessary only for certain Souls more elevated and more perfect, and to believe that it is not for the common sort of Christians. For if Vigilance be a general Vertue, and if it be for all Christians that Jesus Christ said, *Watch and pray lest ye fall into temptation*; 'tis also all Christians that he orders to be recollected, and not to be dissipated, seeing that the practice of Vigilance includes that of Recollection, and that 'tis impossible to watch and not to be recollected.

This is what is very easie to be comprehended, by considering what is understood by Recollection. There is an interior and exterior one. The exterior consists in the retention of the Senses, in keeping silence and solitude as much as we can, in avoiding Tumults and multiplicity of Affairs, and principally those which dissipate and draw us out of our selves. The interior consists in not entertaining our selves with vain and frivolous Thoughts, in being attentive to God, in standing before him in a kind of continual adoration, in being busied about good Thoughts, and principally about those which may serve us for Rules to do all our Actions in the sight of God.

It is evident now, That all we have said hitherto is nothing but the practice of inward Recollection. For we

we cannot be more profitably recollected, than in adoring God inwardly in all Places, and in all Creatures, in hearkening to what he ſays, in conſulting his Pleaſure, in beholding him always as our only Protector, and our only Refuge in all temptations which attack us, in watching all our Motions as well exterior as interior.

But it is clear, That this recollection, which is inward, inclines us of it ſelf to the outward. For if we conſult God's Law in the uſe we ought to make of our Senſes, we ſhall cut off preſently all the uſe of Senſe, which only tends to pleaſure, and which hath no neceſſity.

'Tis not a Counſel of Perfection. 'Tis the eternal and unchangeable Law of God, which obliges Man to love none but him, to delight only in him; to make uſe of Creatures, but with the moderation of him who makes uſe of them, and not with the Paſſion of him who enjoys them: *Utentis modeſtia, non amantis affectu.* We muſt not then believe that 'tis permitted to any to let looſe the Reins of his Senſes, how innocent ſoever the Objects may be. For 'tis ſufficient that the pleaſures be not neceſſary, to abſtain from them; and this moderation, ſo neceſſary for all the World, does not only regard Eating and Drinking, but alſo other ſenſual Objects. There muſt always be ſome other reaſon than that of ſeeking our proper ſatisfaction to excuſe the uſe of it. And ſo whoſoever hath a care to have God's Law before their Eyes, and to follow it in their Actions, are obliged to be very circumſpect in the manner of making uſe of their Senſes.

All Chriſtians are obliged to pray, and thoſe who live in the World are in ſome ſort more obliged thereunto than others, becauſe they have more ſtrong temptations to combate, being expoſed to greater perils, and having need of greater helps from God. They are then obliged to avoid what may hinder the efficaciouſneſs of their Prayers, ſeeing 'tis by theſe Prayers they muſt obtain this help and aſſiſtance. And as there is nothing more oppoſite to a Spirit of Prayer, than the diffuſion of the Soul into the Senſes; and as 'tis the ordinary ſource of thoſe diſtractions which corrupt our Prayers, and which make

make them uncapable of pleaſing God, the ſame Obligation which binds them to pray, obliges them alſo to preſerve their Souls from this diſſipation.

What I have newly ſaid of the evaporation of the Soul by the Senſes, may be applied to the diſſipation which ariſeth from Words. All the World is obliged to fly it, ſeeing 'tis not only to the perfect to whom it is ſaid, they ſhall give an account at the day of Judgment of their unprofitable and unneceſſary Words, but generally ſpeaking to all Mankind.

Whoſoever therefore hath this Law of God before their Eyes, reduce themſelves as much as they can to ſilence. Avoid frivolous Converſations. Are perſwaded, as the *Apoſtle ſaith*, that they ought to ſpeak only before God, and in Jeſus Chriſt. And by the attention they have upon all their Words and Actions, they retrench all that tends not to God, and that ſprings not from his Spirit.

Now by retrenching both unprofitable Divertiſements and Diſcourſes, we are reduced by a neceſſary conſequence to a kind of ſolitude, being we ſcarce go out from thence, but through a deſire to be entertained with Men, or to feed our ſelves with the ſights, and other Objects of the Senſes.

In fine, There are ſome common Duties to be included in this Employ, not to charge our ſelves with too diſſipating affairs without neceſſity, not to undertake what we cannot accompliſh with a Spirit of Prayer, to do all our Actions through ſome conſiderations of God, and not through human and worldly Intentions: For 'tis to all Mankind that this advice of the wiſe Man is addreſſed, that we muſt not puzzle our ſelves in a multitude of Actions. *Fili ne in multis ſint Actus tui.* 'Tis to all Mankind that 'tis forbidden to overburthen themſelves. And laſtly, 'Tis to all Mankind that 'tis commanded to do all for the Honour of Jeſus Chriſt, and to love God with all their Hearts, which obliges them to do nothing but for him, and by the motives of his love.

'Tis very true that this Recollection ought to be practiſed differently, according to the different conditions, becauſe it conſiſts not in avoiding all the Words, and all the Affairs, and all the Companies, and all the Objects of the Senſes, but in keeping our ſelves, in reſpect of all theſe things, within the boundaries of neceſſity, and proportion to their inward forces.

But

But it would be alſo an error to believe that we might not be recollected without an entire ſilence, an entire retreat, an actual ſeparation from all Objects of the Senſes, and from all Affairs. Thus 'tis viſible, that being Vigilant over our ſelves, as we have already ſaid, we practiſe recollection as much as is neceſſary to ſatisfy the Duty of Chriſtianity, and to arrive even at the moſt eminent perfection.

CHAP. XIV.

That Chriſtian Vigilance inclines us to the exerciſe of all Vertues, and that 'tis alſo an excellent preparatory to Prayer.

CHriſtian Vertue conſiſting in the practice of its Duties, in overcoming Temptations which diſſuade us from them, and in doing the one and the other in conſideration of God, and for the love of Juſtice, it is evident that what places this Juſtice before our Eyes, what diſcovers theſe temptations, what makes us watchful over the motions of the Heart, which are the ſource of our good Actions, and our Falls, according to the Goſpel, what ſhews us at laſt from whence we may be able to obtain the ſuccour, which is neceſſary to uphold us in the exerciſe of all Chriſtian Vertues, doth engage us as it were neceſſarily to practiſe them.

This is what will be yet comprehended, if we conſider that thoſe who have a true deſire to addict themſelves perfectly to God, are commonly diſſuaded from practiſing them only becauſe they do not think of them, and becauſe they do not apply themſelves to diſtinguiſh the occaſions of them. For having always a Fountain of an evil Vigilance which opens their Eyes to ſeek their Pleaſures, and their Intereſts, which is Concupiſcence, they cannot hinder this ill Principle from dragging them by another Vigilance, which ſets them as a guard againſt all theſe diligent enquiries of ſelf-love. So whoſoever is not Vigilant to mortifie himſelf, does not mortifie himſelf at all. For he never fails to perceive the occaſions wherein his Senſes and his Mind may find ſome pleaſure, but he never perceives the occaſion of mortifying them. 'Tis what Nature never makes us think of. So that it may be alledged as a certain truth, that a diſſipated life is an unmortified life, and in which is mingled conſequently an infinite ſecret enquiries about the ſatisfaction of the Senſes, the delights of the Body, and what may be able to ſatisfie Vanity.

What I have ſaid of mortification, may be ſaid of all othe Vertues. We do not practiſe them at all, when we do nor watch. And Concupiſcence on the contrary, whoſe time is al-t

ways

ways ready, is never ſlack in acting when we are unmindful to hinder it. Thus for want of Attention and Vigilance, we loſe a thouſand occaſions of exerciſing Chriſtian Vertues, even when we have a deſire to do it in our Hearts.

'Tis by this means yet that Vigilance is an excellent diſpoſition to Prayer; for all Vertues prepare thereunto, and all faults are obſtacles. The Union we have with our Neighbour, the deſire of their Welfare as of our own, the bearing with their Faults, the forgetting, or even the agreeableneſs for what they may have done, which might diſpleaſe us, the Charity for the Church, and for all its Members, the Zeal for the Glory of God, the Deſire and Eagerneſs for eternal Goods; all other Vertues likewiſe, how good they may be in the Heart, are employed to rule the outward Man, as circumſpection in Speech, modeſty in the Countenance, mortification of all the Senſes; all theſe Vertues, I ſay, prepare for Prayer, and render it more fervent. On the contrary, according to St. *Ambroſe*, in *Pſal.* 118. Sins burthen the Soul, and keep us ſeparated from God, by hindering us from raiſing our ſelves up to him. *Peccato graveſcit oratio, & longe fit à Deo.*

St. *Bernard* does attribute particularly this ill effect to the Sins of the Tongue, and unprofitable Diſcourſes. *There is not any inſtrument*, ſaith he, *more proper to drain the Heart than the Tongue; and I think in that the Conſcience of many among you renders Teſtimony of what I ſay; for which of you is ſo perfect that he has not felt, after long Diſcourſes, his Mind empty, his Meditations without Devotion, the Affections of his Heart dry and withered, and his Prayer without Unction, becauſe of the Words he had ſpoken or underſtood?*

Not only the practice of Vertues diſpoſes us to pray, but it is even a Prayer and a praiſing God, according to St. *Auſtin*. How, *ſaith this Doctor*, Can a Man have the force to praiſe God all day long? I am going to teach you the ſecret. Let all you do be well done, and you will praiſe God. *Quidquid egeris bene age, & laudaſti Deum.*

CHAP. XV.

An Anſwer to a difficulty concerning divers means of keeping our ſelves in the preſence of God.

I Do not queſtion but thoſe who ſhall read what has been written in this Treatiſe, have been often ſtruck with this thought, that 'tis very hard and even impoſſible to make all theſe Reflections amongſt a croud of Employments, wherewith moſt part of the World are overwhelmed, and that if we ſhould be troubled to apply our Minds to ſo many different proſpects, by dwelling ſolitary

ſolitary in the Houſe, and endeavouring to recollect our ſelves as much as poſſible we could, it is yet much more difficult to do it in the diſſipation, which is almoſt inſeparable from a Worldly life, and in the application that we are obliged to have for the Affairs which employ us therein.

And indeed we cannot deny but that theſe practices cauſe ſome conſtraint, above all at the beginning, ſeeing they ought to hinder the Mind from following its natural Propenſity, to recal it often from its ſtrayings which are agreeable to it, to apply it to ſome Objects which it hath a ſenſible diſlike for, and to interrupt oftentimes that which it finds in thoſe which are moſt familiar with it. But the difficulty thereof will appear notwithſtanding much leſs, if we comprehend well whereunto its reduced.

For we muſt not imagine, that at each Action we ought to make theſe Reflections in a diſtinct, clear, and extended manner. We pretend only that we muſt render them familiar, by expreſs conſiderations in thoſe times that St. *Bernard* adviſes to ſet apart every day for *conſideration*, that we may be able to recal them all the day long, by looking upon them with a confuſed look, but ſufficient yet to rule our Actions, and to keep us in the preſence of God.

They are not then ſo many expreſs thoughts which we adviſe, but remains of thoughts; whereof *David* ſaid, *Reliquiæ cogitationum diem feſtum agent tibi.* And this is what is no way troubleſome to us in things which make a lively impreſſion upon our Hearts. For they preſent themſelves to our Minds in the midſt of our Employs; they ſhew themſelves whether we will or no, and we have much more trouble to rid our ſelves of, than to apply our ſelves to them.

When a Painter hath learn'd the Rules of his Art, and ſtrongly imprinted them in his imagination, he needs only to caſt an Eye, to guide himſelf in his Works. It is not neceſſary that he run through this conſequence of Precepts which he did when he learned them, nor that he make long diſcuſſions in his Mind. He ſees at firſt his Rule, and he follows it even without unfolding what he ſees. The Mind has a way of acting by it ſelf much more prompt, than that it makes appear to others in ſpeaking to them; and oftentimes this long conſequence of Words, is nothing but the expreſſing of what it hath conceived at once, and in an inſtant.

It is the ſame with all other Arts which we exerciſe, or put in practice. The Precepts which we have learn'd with care and ſtudy guide afterwards our Actions, and become ſo preſent by the exerciſe, that we hardly diſtinguiſh the ſight we have had of them, and it hinders not the Mind from applying it ſelf to every thing elſe. It would be the ſame in reſpect of thoſe conſiderations which ought to help us to govern our Actions, if we made our Art, our Trade, or our Profeſſion to live like Chriſtians, and if we were well perſwaded that we had nothing

nothing to do but to follow God, and to rule our life by what he has made us know of his pleasure in the Gospel.

But as to follow the Rules of Art with facility, it is necessary to have learn'd them carefully and laboriously; likewise to follow God's Truths with some ease in the conduct of this life, it is necessary to have learn'd them with a laborious application, and not to be discouraged at the difficulties which may be met with therein.

And this is what ought to make us blush in this point of our curiosity. We would have the most important thing of the World, or rather the only important thing which may be in the World, to cost us nothing. We would find God without seeking him; know all Truths without giving our selves the trouble to learn them, and be Master of our selves and thoughts, without having had occasion for all that to do our selves any violence.

This is not the ordinary conduct of God over Man. He is found only by those who seek him with pains; he only puts into our Minds upon occasions the Truths we have need of; and his design in that, is to hide himself in respect of us, to take from us the Idea of a supernatural Conduct; and thereby to keep us in a low way, conform to the weakness of our Vertue.

So to practise profitably all these means which we have proposed to keep our selves in the presence of God, we ought often to meditate on them by express considerations, and render them present to our selves in such a manner, that we may have nothing to do but to cast our Eyes upon them from time to time, to renew them all at once in our Minds.

Likewise we must not pretend, that God ought presently to make us enjoy them, and we ought to esteem our selves too happy, that he does us that favour of labouring therein our whole life, without disheartning us with the faults which we shall commit there, nor for our small advancement. Provided that when God shall take us out of this World, he find us yet bent to seek out his Justice; we ought to hope he will finish the rest in the other World. Now this diligent scrutiny is to seek and find out a means to have God always present in our Actions, and to endeavour to walk before his face, seeing that 'tis practising what the Prophet recommends to us by these Words. *Quærite Dominum & confirmemini, quærite faciem ejus semper.*

It will not be amiss to advertise, that when we recommend here to make some endeavour to keep our selves in the presence of God, and to apply our selves all day long to the divers means we have given to practise this exercise, we do not pretend to counsel a violent application, 'tis enough to turn mildly the Mind towards God by the different ways we have proposed, without discovering at each regard what will be presently discovered, except it be in the occasions we shall doubt of what we ought to do, in which case it is good to desist, that we may not act with inconstancy and by hazard. But besides that, a meer look and a simple elevation to God is enough, not only to rule our Actions, but oftentimes also to obtain for us new lights, and to discover in Objects which shall present to us, new Truths, to which we have not as yet applied our thoughts.

FINIS.